

# THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

By

HUMBERT CLÉRISSAC, O.P.

Preface by

JACQUES MARITAIN

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## PREFACE

FATHER HUMBERT CLÉRISSAC was born at Rocamadour on the 15th October, 1864. He went to school at the Jesuit college of Avignon. At sixteen he decided to enter the Order of St. Dominic. The reading of Lacordaire's *Life of St. Dominic* had revealed to him what his supernatural family would be. He carried out his plan at once with great determination. His mother being in the secret, he left his home for Sierra in Switzerland where he began his novitiate. He finished his studies at Rijckholt in Holland and was professed on the 30th August, 1882.

He preached much in France, still more in Italy, at Rome, at Florence (where he often preached during Lent for the French colony), and in England, especially in London. Everywhere God gave him the gift of bringing souls to the Church. When the French religious were dispersed in 1903, he left for London where he hoped to establish a French Dominican community. This foundation, on which he spent

much time and zeal, fell through at the last moment and he returned to France. He still carried on his apostolic work, notably by preaching during Lent in Italy, but he preferred to preach retreats to religious communities, where he found minds more able to understand him and an environment in which his spirit could develop in its own way. Through this he was often the guest of the community of Solesmes, whom he loved dearly and who returned his affection in full. It was also a great joy for him to stay at Rijckholt, where, on one of his last visits, he presided over the entry into the Dominican Third Order of Ernest Psichari, whom he had received into the Church in February, 1913.

The dispersion of his Order had inflicted on him an incurable wound; he needed the life of the choir and that common fraternal dwelling together that, as David says, is so good and joyful and which forms, as it were, an abbreviated likeness of the Church. But if the world and contact with the world had made him suffer cruelly, he himself was more than ever a stranger to the world, more than ever occupied with God alone; his soul had risen into the realms of peace; in Dante's phrase, it *bid itself in the light*. At the moment when, having come to the pleni-

rude of his maturity, it might have been thought that he was about to give his fullness to men, he was suddenly withdrawn from this world. After a short illness, during which he could still offer Mass, he died in the night of the 15th-16th November, 1914. It was one of those very humble deaths which God seems to reserve for his closest friends.

Always, in conformity with that religious vocation to which he was so perfectly faithful, he had been *reserved for God*. God was indeed his portion and he was indeed the portion of God. And so his external life and his apostolic labours, whose details are little known because he never spoke of them, have only a secondary importance in our understanding of him. It might be said that God, helped—if I may speak in this way—by his own humility, wanted to keep all that in the shade and even, when one considers the influence that so great a soul would have seemed bound to have exercised, in a relative unsucccess. But it was in a more profound and mysterious manner that this soul acted—through the invisible radiation of his very being—by the supernatural light with which he was entirely penetrated.

What struck one at first in Fr. Clérissac was the nobility of his presence and the intelligence, almost formidable from its penetration, which shone in his eyes. Hence at the first meetings, a sort of fear and a feeling that here was another who knew too well *quid esset in homine*. This feeling disappeared later on when one got to know him better and became able to appreciate his love for souls and the great gentleness of his good nature.

But what formed the true distinction of his character was that marvellous purity of mind and heart which he so much loved in St. Dominic, and of which God had given him a large share. Purity, integrity, virginal vigour of soul, this, we think, is the deepest mark of his whole interior and exterior life.

He had so strong and true an idea of the divine Purity and Holiness that he used to wake up sometimes in the night quite trembling at the thought of appearing before that light that knows no shadow. *Confite timore tuo carnes meas*. He knew well, he knew seriously and practically that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. He did not like people to be *free and easy* with God. He would meditate readily on the Divine transcendence of Him Whom we know only by analogy.

When he thought of the saints, his mind always turned towards the great purifications which made them undergo those supreme interior trials in which God, withdrawing all sensible emotion and all light, desires the pure adhesion of their naked will. He saw in these great trials one of the distinctive marks of divine mysticism.\* *Noli me tangere*, he went to Jesus with an entirely immaterial spontaneity, wanting nothing that was not Jesus himself.

From this exquisite purity of heart came his

\* 'The trials that purify faith are those which we have the greatest difficulty in understanding. This is because the price of supernatural Truth being unknown to us, we think we value it sufficiently because we adhere to it through a glass darkly. We forget that by reason of its supernatural character and the infinite dignity of its object, our faith can always grow in disinterestedness, in firmness, in independence of human motives. Those who, in our days, place the formal motive of faith elsewhere than in the authority of the Divine Word, in the affinities and needs of the human heart, for example, multiply the dangers of alloying faith with the senses—whatever part they may claim to assign to grace. It is, perhaps, alas! in order to save its connection with the senses, that they remove from their consideration the true formal motive of faith, which is the authority of the Word of God. What God considers, on the contrary, is the quality of our attachment to that authority. Therefore He Himself comes one day to these great elect souls to mortify vigorously everything which might impede the absolute purity of their faith. Often this will only be in an instant at the approach of death; at other times this instant will be prolonged for years. But always it means a dark night in the soul and the ruin of human supports.'

A fragment of the *Monastic Triduum on the Blessed Joan of Arc*, 1910.



profound humility. He once said, with unusual energy: 'The thirst for honours and offices is a sign of reprobation.' In his relations with other people he maintained the most vigilant and delicate reserve, keeping himself hidden from everything that was not God.

He loved the truth with all his soul. His principal concern was to keep his outlook free from every trace of error. He loved the truth, he loved the intelligence because it lived on truth. 'The Christian life,' he often repeated, 'has intelligence as its basis.' He cherished St. Thomas in whom he was always finding new joys and new wonders. What he admired most in certain of his masters was that they lived the truth, fashioned their practical life out of doctrine and theology; and it is this that we find realized in him. The centre of his activity was in the contemplation of the truth. 'Before all else, God is the Truth; go to Him, love Him under this aspect,' he often said, commenting on St. Augustine's phrase about eternal happiness: *gaudium de veritate*.

He loved the Church with all his soul. What he asked of those who came to him was to adhere fully to the mystery of the Church. In order to do this he thought that reason and faith needed to be helped by a living, tender charity which

alone can teach the soul the true nature of the Bride of Christ. And he thought that a certain dryness of heart and a certain self love, obscuring the mind on this point, were the principal reasons why some had strayed into the error of modernism.

He was proud of the Church. He loved the grandeur of the Church. He would not allow St. Gregory VII or Boniface VIII to be attacked. Every diminution of the rights of God and of the rights of the Church, and any slackness in claiming these rights, wounded him cruelly. I have always thought that Benson, who knew him well, had him in mind when he drew the Pope in *Lord of the World*.

As he loved the Church, so he loved the religious state and nothing was dearer to him than the dignity of that state. Correcting certain current errors, he would explain that what constitutes the specific value of the religious vows is the intervention of the Church who, by publicly accepting and officially consecrating the human person to God, like a chalice or an altar, puts that person into a state (*status perfectionis acquirendæ*) which is indispensable for the full life of the mystical Body of Christ.

He developed a splendid teaching on the pro-

vidential rôle, the essential character and the mission of each of the great religious families. He showed the monastic Order as the archivist and living witness of ecclesiastical antiquity, vowed to perpetuate the type of the primitive and perfect Christian community wholly ordained to divine worship; the Friars Preachers, with their mission to maintain the Christian Intelligence in the light of Contemplation and of Theology; the sons of St. Francis, with their work of bringing Poverty, Simplicity, the spirit and virtues of the Gospel into Christian life; the Fathers of the Company of Jesus, sent to ensure the ascetical discipline of the Christian will by adapting it to the conditions of modern life.\* And he never ceased to thank God for having put him in the family of St. Dominic, because of that Order's love for doctrine and its fidelity to pure truth.

\* Of the Carmelites, whose restoration in France had been compromised by the tragic affair of Fr. Loyson and whose modern revival was not then predictable, Fr. Clérissac might have said that their special mission was to transmit to men the sanctifying influence of the eremitical life—*speciosa deserti*—and to teach the Christian soul the ways of mystical union and prayer. (Cf. *Le Carmel*, by a Discalced Carmelite, *Lib. de l'Art Catholique*, 1922; *La tradition mystique du Carmel*, by Fr. Jérôme de la Mère de Dieu, *Saint-Maximin*, 1924.)

As for the Carthusians, their mission as pure Contemplatives, entrenched in the divine mountains of solitude and interceding for the entire Church, is sufficiently evident. (Cf. the *Apostolic Constitution* of Pius XI, 8th July, 1924; published in the *Acta* of the 15th October, 1924.)

He greatly wished his brethren to preserve their *intellectual race*, as he called it, without alteration.

It can easily be guessed how such a soul must have had to suffer in an epoch like our own. He suffered in silence, but with a singular depth and intensity. It is only in certain descriptions of the great Pius X that I have felt some resemblance to his sadness.

It was not only the mode of life in our secularist and democratic regime that afflicted him. He had a stern idea of what the religious and priestly life demanded; the reality he met with did not always correspond to it; and the feeling of the responsibility of the salt of the earth in the history of the world weighed heavily upon him. He believed that the diminution of faith, the disappearance of all public recognition of the rights of God, and finally the weakening of reason in modern times, marked one of the lowest levels to which the world could descend.

The Mass, said Vincent Ferrer, is the highest work of contemplation.\* I have never assisted and I believe I shall never again assist at Masses

\* *Missa est altius opus contemplationis quod possit esse* (Serm. Sab. post Dom. *Oculi*).

which he described with so youthful an enthusiasm.

His conversation was full of charm and life. He expressed himself with a very great natural eloquence and in a language of classic purity. He loved everything that was beautiful, living and sincere. He constantly re-read Dante. He surrounded himself with the finest pictures of Angelico. But his chief delight was in the Dialogue and the Letters of St. Catherine of Siena. He had a profound devotion to this great Contemplative, whom the Church praises for having served the Lord like a diligent bee, *sicut apīs argumentosa*. . . . He was devoted also to his own Province and especially to the Sainte-Baume. Two other pilgrimages were dear to him: Laus, where one day, whilst he was giving communion, the holy shepherdess Benoite allowed him to smell the perfume from her tomb; and Salette, where he paid his last visit in 1912. He always spoke with deep emotion of the tears which the Blessed Virgin had poured forth there—to remind us, he said, of all the exigencies of the supernatural life and of *compunction* of heart.

It was a joy to him to honour the Blessed Virgin as the Queen of the angelic Spirits, the

Throne of Wisdom. He was happy when veneration was paid to the splendour of her intelligence, as it was in the Middle Ages; on one of the doors of Chartres, for example, she is represented surrounded by the seven liberal Arts. He told me one day that he believed that her habitual meditation must have been—but with what divine profundity—the most simple truths of faith, on the great law of the Cross in particular.

How can I explain what an incomparable guide he was in the spiritual life? I will only say that he always took his inspiration from the two masters of his heart, St. Paul and St. Thomas, and from Christian antiquity. The defect he ceaselessly pursued was 'the reflexive spirit,' as he called it; the spirit of turning back on one's self, of preoccupation with one's self. He was equally relentless against individualism and the tendency to make either feelings or exterior activity predominate. The higher the soul ascends, he would say, the more universal it becomes. The right way to go to God is to turn towards Him and to see; to keep the eyes fixed on divine truth and then allow God to have His way. He believed that the spirit of prayer and

of contemplation, the spirit of union with the Church, was of more value than ascetical exercises. The ladder which he used for the ascensions of his soul had two rungs: doctrine and the liturgy. The purely external definitions of the liturgy, which are often given, did not satisfy him at all. For him the liturgy was the very life of the Church, its life as Bride and Mother, the great sacramental which enabled souls to participate in all the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ. He thought the idea that the liturgy and private prayer are opposed to each other to be absurd. But he held that, on the one hand, from the point of view of contemplation, the *opus Dei* is the supreme means of forming the soul to prayer; and on the other, in the sphere of the virtue of religion, private prayer, as the *vigilate semper*, is to be practised precisely in order to prepare the soul to take part worthily in that sovereign work of the liturgy in which the charity of the Church is poured out. 'The participation in the hieratic life of the Church seems almost an end in itself, or at least as the supreme means towards the particular considerations of private prayer, since it is the sure entry into the particular mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ. To attempt, on this account,

to over-simplify individual discipline in the virtues, would, doubtless, be illusory and rash. But this reproach, even when justly incurred, would not in any way prove that the whole life of the Church terminates in individual asceticism. It would prove that every participation in the mysteries of the Church and of Christ presupposes certain results already acquired in the sphere of the virtues, and that its precise work is to elevate the virtue acquired by the individual to its perfection, its utmost efficiency and joy.'

He had for all the saints a very tender love. It was a love varied in its emphasis and intelligently discerning and therefore not diminishing but enriching his appreciation of those upon whom his preference fell. He tried to discover how each had deserved to be described as 'without equal in preserving the law of the Most High.' If we are to formulate one of the great themes on which he loved to dwell—a theme suggested, however, and infinitely qualified, rather than definitely affirmed—I should say that in his eyes the history of Christian perfection, as it can be read in the life of the saints and in the life of institutions, is explained in part by a kind of providential accommodation to the needs



of a declining world and in part from the laws of growth and organic progress of the mystical Body of Christ. As a matter of fact he could not help preferring the grandeur, simplicity and divine spontaneity of the saints of the first ages who were nearer to Good Friday and Pentecost, to that undivided fullness of the great effusion of grace in which the Church was born. He preferred the Christ *pantocrator* of the Byzantines to the more sorrowfully human crucifix of our Middle Ages. He thought that the historical importance and the spiritual sublimity of the Fathers of the Desert could never be sufficiently insisted on. He who loved St. Thomas so much, who enjoyed attaching what he read in the Gospels to its setting in the *Summa*, nevertheless liked to repeat that the wisdom of St. Paul, rushing out from its source, wholly inspired, is more purely divine than the scientifically elaborated wisdom of the *Summa Theologica*.

He did not doubt that the authentic teaching of St. Teresa on the ways of union with God was substantially identical with that of the ancients. He knew that the saint who would 'have given her life for the least ceremony of the Church' was a true daughter of the great monastic tradition whose spirit she wanted to revive by

restoring the rule of Blessed Albert. Further, speaking 'as a simple woman,' as she so often described herself, rather than as a theologian, if she felt bound to enter into psychological descriptions and analyses which the ancient teachers had neglected, this is because her providential mission was to fix in this way, for the needs of the modern intelligence, the age-long mysticism of the Church. Nevertheless, when it was a question of pointing out the general significance of the various forms imposed by the condition of the times on spiritual teaching, he wrote (in a letter to an Oblate of St. Benedict): 'St. Teresa has captivated you. That is quite natural and it is sometimes good to be reminded of the notion of acquired virtue and of positive effort by the example of the saints of the reflective age who without any doubt God raised up in order to show that whatever is good and true in individualism does not escape his Grace and issues from it; in part also, in condescending pity for men when the simple life of the Church no longer sufficed them,—finally from vindictive justice against the infidelities of the ancient Orders who, alas! allowed the torch in their hands to grow dim.

'But do not forget that you belong to the

Merovingian, the feudal times,—to the primitives. Do not forget that you must allow divine Grace to effect everything in you and to count the products of your own activity for almost nothing.’

He required everything that concerned the virtue of obedience to be envisaged in a most purely supernatural way. An order or a counsel received from a superior acting within the domain of his legitimate authority might be, in itself, ill-founded, inopportune, harmful to the interests of those it ought to serve. Nevertheless, unless the act prescribed is sinful, it should be deferred to; for it comes to us as a limping messenger from Him Whom we alone obey—our action passing through and beyond all the created hierarchies; and it is dependent upon that general and obscure government of Providence which makes the worst human infirmities serve a greater good.

Father Clérissac was certain that even when no express precept has been given it is always possible to pick out the pure spiritual line which gives to the virtue of obedience the direction marked out for it by God. He added, however, that such a deference to authority demands the

most delicate discernment according to the degrees and species of subordination and of commands. For obedience is concerned with a docility of the practical judgement which is both living and free, and not with a servile and mechanical carrying out of commands. Although, for example, he was firmly attached to his monarchist convictions, he deplored that French Catholics had been so lacking in obedience to Leo XIII; and he equally blamed some for having given less, and others more, than a filial and intelligent deference demanded. How many other examples he could have given of such absence of obedience in spirit and in truth to the wishes of the Pope!

He dedicated these refinements of obedience, these reserves, this chastity of the will primarily to God. He was a man of great desires; and it seems that God was so contented with the sight of these pure desires that he allowed very few of them to be satisfied. I see now that to the extent to which immediate realizations were refused him, to that extent he was acting for the future and not for his actual time—an example of that absolutely mysterious action of an instrument of divine Causality which breaks through space and time. I can still remember him talking to me of

these things as we were walking one evening in front of the cathedral of Versailles outlined in dark splendour in the clear night. 'Jacques,' he said, 'the fact that a work is quite evidently useful for the good of souls is not sufficient reason for us to rush to carry it out. It is necessary that God should wish it for this precise moment (in that case there must be no delay); and God has His own time. It must first be desired, and be enriched and purified by that desire. It will be divine at this cost. And the man who will be charged with carrying it out will not perhaps be the one who has best understood it. We should beware of a human success that is too complete and too striking; it may conceal a curse. Let us not go faster than God. It is our emptiness and our thirst that He needs, not our plenitude.'

Of all the vast dreams into which Father Clérissac poured his desire, some, since his day, have begun to be accomplished. Others than he have entered into the harvest. Nevertheless he saw its promise. When I recall how he prayed that intelligence and beauty should come back to their Lord, and when to-day I see so many signs of such a return, I feel the great significance of the fact that he was a witness at the Catholic

death of a poet so tragically representative as poor Oscar Wilde.\*

.. The last sermons of Fr. Clérissac—at least in France—were those for the month of Mary, preached in 1914 at Notre Dame de Lorette. I cannot describe the impression of gentleness, simplicity, holiness and supernatural tenderness which these sermons conveyed. It was a pure effort of the soul to make the knowledge and love of God and of the Blessed Virgin penetrate into the very depths of the human heart.

It seems that in these last years his charity, meekness and recollection deepened still further. On one of the last occasions that I saw him he told me that his thoughts were turning with a singular happiness to the days of his novitiate, that it was a great mistake for a religious to want to 'emancipate' himself from the practices of the novitiate, and that it was essential to remain faithful to the humblest of these practices in

\* Fr. Clérissac never spoke to me about Wilde. But I understand from Mrs. Bellamy Storer that he once said to her that he was sure that Wilde had died a Catholic, for he was there. Mr. Robert Ross (cf. *Revue Hebdomadaire*, 28th November, 1925), on the other hand, designates Fr. Cuthbert Dunn as having given Wilde baptism and extreme unction. Have the names been confused? In any case the statement reported by Mrs. B. S. must mean at least that Fr. Clérissac was informed of everything at the time it took place, doubtless by the priest who assisted Wilde.

order to keep always a childlike attitude towards God and to maintain the soul in the disposition for prayer. 'If we only knew what it means to pray!' he added. 'It is so rare that we really pray! When we are well recollected, when we have a certain feeling of the presence of God, when we have impulses towards Him—then we think we are praying. In reality we are still only at what is prerequisite for prayer. . . .'

His soul had become mature like a ripe fruit; the time for gathering it was at hand: *Et cum produxerit fructus, statim mittit falcem quoniam adest messis.\**

Father Clérissac had written two volumes which, in spite of their value, could not, on account of his excessive reserve, reveal what manner of man he was: *L'Ame Saine* and *De saint Paul à Jésus-Christ*. Then he wrote a brochure on *Fra Angelico*, and later he published privately a few copies of a triduum,† full of admirable doctrine, on St. Joan of Arc, 'the messenger of divine politics,' as he called her. Then there is a sermon on *L'Amour propre dans l'étude et dans la vie*. Many monasteries preserve

\* Mark iv. 29.

† *La Bienheureuse Jeanne d'Arc*, a monastic triduum, Abbey of Notre Dame, Oosterhout, 1910.

precious notes taken from his instructions. A retreat, *Pro Domo et Domino*, on the Order of St. Dominic, preached in London about 1904 and published in 1919 in an Italian translation, has been published in French under the title: *L'Esprit de saint Dominique*.\* We will quote a page from this fine and ardent book as an illustration of Fr. Clérissac's firmest convictions. Speaking of the great doctrine of man's elevation to the supernatural order, he says, 'the practical utility of this doctrine comes out also in the fact that it is almost impossible to understand the literal meaning of some of the passages in the Gospels and certainly impossible to understand their inward meaning if the distinction between the natural and the supernatural is not present to the mind. When our Lord tells us that those who know Him possess eternal life; that no one goes to the Father except through Him and no one to Him unless he is led by the Father; when He demands such great renunciations from His disciples; when He curses the spirit of the world; every time He speaks of light, without however making the slightest allusion to the natural sciences; when He promises happiness at the cost of persecution and sacrifice; finally, when

\* Editions de la *Vie Spirituelle*, Saint-Maximin (Var), 1924.



we see that since His time the Church and the influence of the Gospel have so little changed the natural order of things, then we come into contact with a life implicated in our present life and which is not only added to it, but which absolutely transcends it as it transcends all our human hopes and all our human aspirations. If we take away the light thrown on these ideas by the supernatural they lose their strength and cease to harmonize with the initial mystery of the Incarnation. If the supernatural is eliminated from exegesis the writings of St. Paul are those of a lunatic.'

The present volume contains Fr. Clérissac's last work. By publishing it we fulfill a duty in which joy and sadness are mingled; for this summary, very substantial but almost too condensed, was not revised by its author and remains incomplete. Fr. Clérissac intended to develop certain parts, and he wanted to rewrite Chapter VII on the Mission and the Spirit. He died before he had written the last chapter on the Feasts of the Mystery of the Church. It is thus a collection of thoughts and fragments rather than a treatise to which we give publicity. But still we are confident that many souls will find in this lofty Meditation, interrupted by death, the nourishment they need.

## PRELIMINARIES

TURPIS est omnis pars universo suo non congruens. Any part which does not harmonize with its whole, St. Augustine remarks,\* is deformed. Thus a Christian degrades himself and decays to the extent in which he is removed from unity with the Church—the universe and source of life for each of the faithful. ‘To be a member,’ says Pascal, ‘is to have neither life, being, nor movement, except through the spirit of the body and for the body.’

There is no such thing as individual Christianity, and the faith which justifies is directed to an object proposed to all by the common Mother of the baptized. Whether faith is mysteriously infused into the soul of a child or whether it is a triumph of grace over the will of an adult, it immediately incorporates both the one and the other into the Church as necessarily as it makes them sons of God.

\* *Conf.*, iii. 8.

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\* *Conf.*, iii. 8.

Many heterodox people have a strong liking for a certain seemingly mystical conception of the Church as an entirely invisible society of spirits. As long as they exclude from this vague collectivity of souls any hierarchy, any sacramental economy, any doctrinal magisterium, the notion is purely romantic. But even when—according to the degree of their good faith—they introduce into this conception of the Church a more or less incomplete hierarchical or sacramental element, they are still yielding too much to sentiment; they are belittling the mystery.

Only the true notion of the Church, which requires a hierarchy and a visible unity and all the visible means of grace, can exclude sentimentality. It demands the entire range of the things of sense so that the domain in which it establishes order may be totally inclusive. It embraces the whole mystery.

Apologetics, Christian archeology, even the social sciences find the principle of their most happy solutions and of their finest discoveries in the mystery of the Church. A sense of reality and inspiration can only be assured to them by the ever present notion of the Church. 'Mihi vero archiva Jesus Christus': My documents, my archives are Jesus Christ, said St. Ignatius of

Antioch.\* For the same reason the Church also constitutes our archives. Further, under the influence of the mystery of the Church these sciences should be able to open our hearts to a rich treasure of divine emotion. How can the most refined pleasure of antiquaries be compared with the sweet fragrance yielded by the texts and monuments of the Liturgy or of those of the times of persecution? If the doctrinal conflicts of the Fathers, the debates of the Councils, the epic story of the great Popes sweep across the soul with something more than the thrill of historical reality, it is because through all of them we feel the spirit of the divine Church.

As for speculative theology, it is a sacred science in the strict sense of the word, precisely because its principles are provided and fixed by the Faith, *i.e.*, by the Church. It might also be called a sacred science from the point of view of its destination, for its conclusions prepare and hasten the hour of new dogmatic decisions; they form the anticipated material of these decisions, a material which the sentence of the Church will transform into the pure light of revelation and an object of divine faith.

\* Philadelph., viii. 2. Ἐμὲ δὲ ἀρχαῖα ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

The joy and vital energy which theology dispenses are incomparable, because this science is simply the baptismal illumination become conscious and progressive. But the measure of this progress is our union with the Church. The ordinary Christian who begins to live by the prayers of the Church acquires a sure instinct of orthodoxy and feels an increase in his need for penetrating the doctrines of the faith. The religious, who bears witness by his state to the Church's note of sanctity, lives in an atmosphere of doctrine and can leave it no more. The Bishop, supremely the man of the Church, is also supremely and in full right the Theologian.

The vision of many people when they think of the Church is only that of a divine institution to be defended, or else of a social restoration to be effected by means of the Gospel. They seem to owe their joy as believers and even their conversion to this discovery that the Church is a cause defensible before reason and history and that it is an institution adaptable to all social conditions. This is a confusion which distracts the soul from its true source of life and gradually impoverishes it.

In reality, apologetics (either scientific or social) is only a preparation or a defence. It is

In no way the life either of the Church or of the soul. The life of the Church is the life of Christ himself; the life of the soul is sanctifying grace. The victualling of these two cities is done from within and from above.

Apologetics is a successful sortie in time of siege. It clears and protects the approaches to the City and makes them observable; it does not enable those outside to enter in. In so far as the act of faith is comparable to an argument, apologetics can supply the premisses. The conclusion of this argument, from the fact that it bears upon a supernatural object and is accompanied by the essentially supernatural reality which gives it its power of salvation, has a more extensive content than the premisses. It is placed, and it places you, in another order, the order of mystery; and in another world, the world of divine life. No apologetics then can engender it in you.\*

But apologetics can be, both for the Church and the soul, the means of most valuable actual grace definitely bearing upon their life. This is honour enough for it.

Let us go to the Church, therefore, for reasons that are eternal and divine.

\* Cf. *Logic and Faith in Our Reasonable Service*. Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P.



Let us know and love the Church in the very idea in which God willed Her, knows Her and loves Her. This idea belongs to God alone. It is neither a deduction of our reason nor a postulate of our nature. It is supernatural. And, although we can experience its beauty and richness, we shall never penetrate its depths. For it encloses a mystery.

And if it is true, in a general way, that the more light one has the more one realizes the greatness of the mystery, nevertheless it is not the observation of our own limitations that will lead us to the mystery of the Church. It is the light of God that will do this. And that is why, inversely, the more we attach ourselves to this mystery, the more that light will grow.

In Catholic terminology mysteries are the objects of Faith considered not only as incomprehensible statements, but chiefly as divine facts. That is to say, that we consider the mysteries: (1) in their concrete and original reality, thus the Trinity in the intimate life of God, the Incarnation in the Annunciation and the Manger, the Redemption in the Cross, Hell in the eternity of fire and punishment; (2) in their ever operating power: thus, to begin in the inverse direction, Hell, feared as the last

id, is a supernaturally efficacious motive; everything that is done in the Church is in the name and by the power of the Trinity; the Incarnation and the Redemption are being incessantly renewed and in innumerable ways.

As divine facts the mysteries have a value as exemplars; as operative facts they have an infinite efficacy. It is in this twofold aspect that the Liturgy unrolls the series of the mysteries. It reconstitutes or evokes their originality. It applies and actualizes their inexhaustible power.

We must seek nothing less in the mystery of the Church; a mystery that is an exemplar and a representation of divine realities and an operative

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIND OF GOD

THE idea in which God sees and loves the Church is His Son.

'In Ipso benedicentur omnes gentes': In Him shall all nations be blessed.\* This blessing is older than Abraham and Adam. The Father's loving contemplation of the Son which dates from all eternity, has always seen in Him the head of an immense body and thus has also seen the Church which is this body.

As early as the second century Hermas represented the Church as an ancient woman and his reason is this: 'Because she was created the first of all things. For this reason is she old; and for her sake was the world established.'†

The Church holds this place in the divine mind precisely because she shares more intimately and thoroughly than the world of the natural creation in the perfection of the Son in Whom God contemplates Himself.

It is the Son Who is the Thought and the

\* Cf. Gen. xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 8.

† The Shepherd, Vis. ii., ch. iv.

living Reason of God and in Whom there shines not precisely the scattered multitude of the exemplars of all beings, but their order; *i.e.*, their perfections and their purposes all harmonized together in a unique pattern. 'In ipso constant': In Him all things subsist.\* And what is more representative of the perfection of this order than the Church?

The Son breathes out the love which makes the unity of the divine Persons. 'Verbum spirans amorem': The Word exhaling Love.† And what is more representative of love and unity than the Church?

She is therefore rooted, so to say, in the utmost depths of the divine being. Before being born from the pierced side of our Lord on the Cross, she was eternally conceived in the Word.

Secondly. The adequate object of the eternal decree which determined the Incarnation is the Church.

This decree makes the Son the real head of the human race, a substitute and a surety for all and each, and for the good as well as for the evil. The Son of God only entered our ranks

\* Col. i. 17.

† St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, Ia, xliii, 5, ad. 2.

with such reality—*Caro factum est*—in order to render to the Father all the homage of satisfaction and all the homage of worship owed to Him by the human race and which it had become incapable of repaying; only to assume the sin of the race and all the individual sins which result from it. He expiates them by the all sufficiency of His Sacrifice. At the same time He recapitulates in Himself alone all religion and all sanctity. He alone disposes all the instruments of our good works. He alone will make valid and authentic our merits and virtues. He will be all in all and all will be in Him.

At the very moment when, putting on His new condition—*habitu inventus ut homo*\*—He bowed Himself in a great act of obedience, it was as Head of the race that He paid this supreme reverence to His Father. For His obedience is manifestly opposed to the disobedience of the first head of the race. '*Sicut per inobedientiam unius . . . ita et per unius obeditionem*': For as by one man's disobedience all were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall all be made righteous.† Already all are in Him and He is all in all.

\* Phil. ii. 7.

† Rom. v. 19.

Thirdly. In the Humanity of His Word, God contemplates the most perfect type of the human race that can possibly be. In Him the realization and the ideal exemplar meet. But a being which exhausts the measure of perfection of its species and of itself alone fulfils the entire purpose of the species, must necessarily be its head. Such a superiority is bound to draw all to itself not merely by its compelling fascination, but by right. And so because Christ in His Father's eyes is the fairest of men, He integrates in Himself all humanity. His royalty is, in the most efficacious sense, His Beauty; and His Kingdom is the Church. '*Specie tua et pulchritudine tua, intende, prospere procede et regna*': In thy splendour and thy beauty, set forth, triumph and reign.\*

Fourthly. The whole point of the Revelation of His Truth, which God decided to give us through His Word, demands the Church and puts Her in the forefront of the divine plan.

'Revelation, which is a social charism, has precedence over personal faith and mystical emotion. It conditions and regulates them, as does every agent of a general nature with regard

\* Ps. xliv. 5.

to the individuals which depend on its action. That is why God does not rely on the limited basis of the intimate and personal experience of the Prophet in order to reveal to us what He is, but on His power as a human being of making absolute affirmations that are transmissible and that can serve as a rule for other minds.' The data of 'common sense' thus become the means of communicating supernatural Truth: they 'establish a way to truth which creates a stable bond amongst men, because, whatever may be the value of the terms used, their meaning is absolute and definitive.'\*

This profound consideration enables a demonstration of the real and absolute value of dogmatic formulæ to be made from the idea of the Church; and of the necessity of the Church from the idea of Dogma.

It also shows the poverty of emotionalist intuition which envisages God only as the centre of the surge of interior phenomena and which makes this mystical surge the unique cause and the unique rule of Religion. The mystery of the Church is more human and more luminous—or, simply, more honest.

\* Gardeil, *Le Donné Révélé et la Théologie*, ch. ii. La Révélation.

It is vain to ask whether the Church would have existed without sin, even though Eve, before the Fall and in the state of justice, is one of her noblest symbols. But it is still more vain to claim that the very perfection of the original state of justice demanded that there should not be a Church under any form whatever. Dante seems to do this in his account of the earthly Paradise where he describes the exercise of the individual free-will as the only function of the Sacerdotium and the Empire.\*

On the contrary, does not the strict dependence which bound the human race to Adam, its head, in the matter of the supernatural life and of sin, suggest that in the state of justice there would have been a spiritual hierarchy of both a family and a social kind?

The Old Testament leaves us in no doubt as to the mind of God in this matter by the vigorous relief in which it brings out the ecclesiastical character of the Messiah Who is to come. In the Old Testament the Messiah is essentially Priest and King.

The greater part of the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the Servant of God are as applicable to the Church as to the person of the Messiah.

\* Purg. xvii., *Jo te sapra te coronò e mitrio.* . .



This is already a kind of 'communication of idioms'\* between the Church and Christ.

Further, when we come to the prophets, the Church assumes the name and quality of a bride: 'I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and judgement and in loving kindness and in mercies. . . .'† 'Fear not; for thou shalt not be confounded . . . for thy Maker is thine husband.'‡ The same idea is to be found in the divine adjurations of chapters 2 and 3 of Jeremiah. The terrible 16th chapter of Ezekiel develops the same image with the most vivid realism.

It is not astonishing that throughout the history of Revelation the favourite method of divine intervention has been not only that of the promise, but of the pact and the alliance. It was in this way that God pledged Himself in turn with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets. It may seem a strange

\* 'Because of the unity of the Person which subsists in two natures, we attribute to the man in Christ that which belongs to God: This man is God, this man is the Almighty, and to God that which belongs to man: God is man, God was born, God suffered, God died. This reciprocal attribution of properties (*ἰδιώματα*) is called by theologians the communication of idioms.' Hugon, *Le Mystère de l'Incarnation*, p. 192.

† Hosea ii. 19.

‡ Isaiah liv.

need in our God thus to bind Himself, and it is not completely explained by the necessity of fixing man's changing will which would follow as the result of this action. Is it not rather the case that in all God's advances to man there is more than an offer of relationship; there is a truly nuptial intention? From the beginning the Kingdom of God is 'like a King who made a marriage for his Son'—for His Son the Word and for His adopted son, man. The Church of the Old Testament is treated by Him as a bride. The Paraphrase of the Targum rightly sees the entire chosen race, the entire Church in the Bride of the Song of Songs.

'Et Spiritus et Sponsa dicunt Veni. Veni, Domine Jesu': And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Come, Lord Jesus.\*

Exclusivism and universality—these are the marks of the Church of the Old Testament. They will be maintained, in a fulfilled manner, in the Church of the New Testament.

Exclusivism in the present, but universality in the future.

Exclusivism on the part of God Who confined His manifestations and promises to Israel, Who cloistered His people and put the seal of

\* Apoc. xxii. 17-20.

His alliance on their flesh. Exclusivism on the part of Israel, who appropriated for itself a God, though well aware of His transcendence; and who regarded all the nations with a scorn more noble and proud than that of the Greeks and Romans for the Barbarians. A most intelligent and humane universality, if we may dare to use the phrase, both on the part of God and of Israel. For it is not to a local conscience but to the conscience of all men that the Decalogue appeals. And the Jerusalem of the Messianic times is the vision of a fatherland that is primarily spiritual, the fatherland of souls. The Prophets only spoke and fought in order to bring to the forefront the Reign of God which begins within human souls and which embraces all the peoples of the world.

This exclusivism and this universality were to become the catholic Unity which is for ever the total characteristic of the Work of the Lord Jesus.

# CHRIST IN THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCH IN CHRIST

THE whole mystery of the Church lies in the equation and convertibility of these two terms: Christ and the Church.

This principle clarifies all the theological axioms concerning the Church. For example: Outside the Church there is no salvation, really means nothing else than: Outside Christ there is no salvation.

Similarly, this principle clarifies, or rather demands and exacts, the four great attributes of the true Church. Wherefore unity, if not because the Truth is in the Church and the Church in the Truth? Wherefore holiness, if not because Grace is in the Church and the Church in Grace? Wherefore catholicity, if not because the universal Redemption is accomplished through the Church and the Church is accomplished through the universal Redemption? Wherefore apostolicity, if not because Christ is in the Apostles and the Apostles in Christ?

Now, this first principle: Christ in the Church and the Church in Christ, comes out of the very fact of the Incarnation. For, taking a human nature, the Son of God began by emptying it of its personality and putting in its place His own divine Person. Only God could penetrate to this depth of our nature and effect so intimate a spoliation. Why did He do so, unless it was to attest the reality of His espousals with Humanity? Can there be a closer union?

But does not this assumption by the Word of an impersonal human nature precisely indicate that, before it is concerned with individual human beings, the Plan of Redemption envisages the whole of Humanity regenerated and united in Christ, *i.e.*, in the Church?

‘What is the Church?’ asked Bossuet. ‘It is the assembly of the Children of God, the army of the living God, His kingdom, His city, His temple, His sanctuary, His tabernacle. We will add something more profound: the Church is Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ poured out and communicated.’

It is remarkable that of the four Notes it should be Catholicity that has come to stand out as the characteristic of the true Church. This is because it includes the others and gives them,

taken as a whole, a striking power of attestation. Catholicity essentially implies Unity: it is simply Unity diffused. But Unity demands an apostolic Hierarchy and Tradition; it also entails Holiness, which is simply the unity of Morality with Doctrine.

Thus Catholicity is Unity, enlarged, organized and resplendent. And so, by adding something fruitful and glorious to Unity, it becomes for the Church the most outstanding sign of its divine institution and of its identity with Christ.

I cannot admit that our God became incarnate to achieve a work that should not be as vast and as well ordered as the world. 'Ecce ego creo coelos novos et terram novam': I create new heavens and a new earth.\* It will therefore be an order as immense and still more perfect than that of the heavens, as extensive as the ends of the earth, but more effective and more beneficent than the order of all earth's kingdoms.

How would the titles† with which the Prophet hailed our Lord be justified if we separated our Lord from the Church and the Church from our Lord?

○ Wonderful Counsellor, or Wonder of Counsel,

\* Isaiah lrv. 17

† *Ibid.*, ix. 6.

This means not only that He must be the oracle of the world through His Church, but that He Himself must first show the superhuman Wisdom of His counsels by disposing His work according to a well conceived plan and upon solid foundations—that is if He is indeed to be that good architect described by St. Paul.\* If this Counsel was to be wonderful in a unique way, it could only be by embracing both Heaven and Earth and by fashioning a union between things visible and things invisible: *Sicut in coelo et in terra*. This plan must be neither purely earthly nor purely spiritual, but like Christ Himself an ordered mingling of the divine and human.

Mighty God. This is the Church militant, invested with the very might of God. 'Non veni pacem mittere sed gladium': I came not to bring peace but the sword.† Our Lord would not be so combated, He would not be so victorious if He only dwelt within the secrecy of souls. It is He who is invincible in His Church. 'Portae inferi non praevallebunt adversus eam': The gates of Hell shall not prevail against Her.‡

Father of the world to come. A spouse was needed to engender the new Israel; a spouse

\* 1 Cor. iii. 10.

† Matt. x. 34.

‡ *Ibid.*, xvi. 18.

ever young and immortal and who will engender for Eternity.

Prince of Peace. The Peace of Christ is a princely and universal gift, far more truly than was the peace of Augustus. The Peace of Christ results from His royalty, because His royalty alone brings order into the world and into souls. But where would be the royalty of Christ without a visible and hierarchic Church?

Further, from the very beginning, our Lord puts forward, not with the feverish accent of human ambition, but with an incomparable authority and certitude, the universality of the objects and aims of His work: You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light of the world.\* And here it is not only a question of the effect of individual good works, *ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem*: that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.† This is clear from the image of the City set on a hill and from that of the House, both of which He was using at that moment and which announce the Church. It is clear also from what follows immediately in His discourse where He speaks as the supreme

\* Matt. v. 13-14.

† *Ibid.*, v. 16.



legislator of all time. 'Non veni legem solvere sed adimplere . . . donec omnia fiant: 'I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For in truth I say to you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.\* But the important thing to note is that this twofold, heavenly and earthly image of the light and the salt announces something that is at once sublime and positive; a doctrine beautiful as light and which will be kept as incorruptible as salt; a holiness which does not depend upon individual emotion, but is sustained in the light of Doctrine. Finally the salt must not lose its savour and be trodden under foot. All this is to be realized in the Church.

Nevertheless in freeing His Church from the narrow limits of Jewish national life our Lord did not act without significant precautions. He declares that He is only sent for the sheep that are perishing in Israel.† Although He has destined His Apostles for the whole world, He keeps them back to begin with, at the threshold of heathendom.‡ And when, on the Mount of

\* Matt. v. 17-18.

† *Ibid.*, xv.

‡ *Ibid.*, x. 5, 6.

Olives, He weeps at the sight of Jerusalem, the 'Quoties volui congregare filios tuos': How often would I have gathered thy children together,\* witnesses to the fact that He wept over the loss of the primacy which, if Israel had remained faithful, it would have retained even in the universal Church. What is the reason for these precautions? It is not only to show that God remains faithful to His great Messianic Promise; it is because if our Lord had abruptly repudiated Israel we should have been led to believe that He repudiated every kind of Theocracy and that He allowed His Church to fall into the dust of religious individualism. Our Lord had no desire for an individualistic religion or for a national Church (in the fragmentary or schismatic sense of the word); but He did desire His Church to be a kingdom. The historian Josephus † believed himself to be the inventor of this great word, Theocracy—which only alarms us because we import our confused ideas into it. Our Lord had made a far greater discovery in speaking of the Kingdom of God, of His Kingdom and of His Church.

The clarity with which the idea of the Church

\* Matt. xxiii. 37.

† Contr. Apion, ii. 16.

stands out in certain discourses of our Lord, *e.g.*, the three great texts on the Primacy of Peter, is certainly adorable. But there is, if I may say so, more interest and more charm in contemplating this same idea of the Church, latent, but with more of the warmth of the divine Heart, running through so many other of His discourses—or simply in seeing it expressed in certain of our Lord's attitudes.

Without examining other passages where the Church is presented as a building, a sheepfold, a vine, a marriage banquet, a school, a city, a kingdom, a living organism, we can find in the episode of the feast of the Dedication the finest and most vigorous of these images composed of both the words and the attitude of our Lord. 'It was winter and Jesus walked in Solomon's porch.'<sup>\*</sup> This incident which we were hardly prepared to meet, since it seems to liken our Lord to the commonplace crowd of idle loungers, in reality emphasizes His character as a Master of Wisdom and Leader of the Schools. For He Himself is the true Peripatetic; but His school and His university is the Temple and not an enclosure reserved for a little group of academic disciples. The architecture of this Porch of Solo-

\* John x. 22.

mon is a wonderful symbol not only of the order, the precision and the harmonious grandeur of the doctrinal edifice which the faith of His Church was to raise up in the world, but also of the abundance of air and light which flows through it, the universality and life of the theological Synthesis. Might we not suggest that St. John recorded this simple incident as a result of the strong impression of its contrast with the Greek schools which confronted him? I see it as an illustration or an equivalent of the 'Docete omnes gentes'.

The Jews were not slow to gather round the Master, and they asked Him a provocative question. He answered: 'You do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep hear my voice: I know them and they follow me.' The School and the Porch suddenly open upon a pastoral scene. How well this mixture of images fits the Church, the fold of the Unique Love and the school of the Unique Truth! The sheep in question here are intelligent and attentive sheep and not even those described by Dante.\*

'And I give them life everlasting and no man shall pluck them out of my hand. That which my Father hath given me is greater than all: and

\* Purg. iii. 79.

no man can snatch them out of the hand of my Father.\*

This then is the living and unbreakable unity of the mystical Body of Christ. This is the capital importance of the Church: *majus est omnibus*. She is united to the Son just as the Son is united to the Father; She is in the Father's hand just as She is in the hand of the Son, Her Bridegroom. This is the mystery of Christ in the Church and of the Church in Christ.

The nearer our Lord approached to His Sacrifice on the Cross the more strength and love He used in order to make us understand the mystery of the Church. The Discourse and the Prayer during and after the Last Supper, in which we must see the archetype of the Liturgy, are the testament left by the Lord to His Church.

'I know them whom I have chosen.' 'He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me.'

'Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him.'

'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.†

\* John x. 29.

† *Ibid.*, xiii. 18, 20, 31, 35.

'I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am ye may be also.'

'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.'

'The Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive . . . you shall know him because he shall dwell with you and be in you.'

'Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but you shall see me because I live and because you shall live. And then you shall know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you.'

'He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.'

'If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.'

'The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you, but not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'\*

\* John xiv. 3, 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27.

'I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman.'

'Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me.'

'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. Continue in my love.'

'Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth. I call you my friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.'

'Because ye are not of the world and because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'\*

'When that Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you.'

'In that day ye shall ask me nothing, but whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you . . . : then, ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.'†

\* John xv. 1, 4, 9, 15, 19.

† *Ibid.*, xvi. 13, 14, 23, 26, 27.

'Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; and that as thou hast given him power over all flesh, he shall give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.'

'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. . . . I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. . . . I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.'

'I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.'

'And now I am no more in the world; but these are in the world, whilst I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.'

'Sanctify them through thy Truth. Thy word is Truth.'

'As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I offer myself, that they also may be sanctified through the Truth.'

'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in



me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.'

'The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.'

'I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.'

'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.'\*

In this way our Lord Jesus Christ, considering the whole of His Church, the universal Church of all time, assures Her of this wonderful participation in the divine Unity and of His own divine glory: *claritatem quam dedisti mihi, dedi eis, ut sint unum sicut et nos*; a participation in His holiness, in His mission, an unlimited credit on His merits and a participation in the all-powerfulness of His prayer; a participation in His peace and His beatitude; a participation also in His visible and temporal empire over all flesh, '*potestatem omnis carnis*', in view of the supreme end of eternal Life; finally, so that there should

\* John xvii. 1-2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26.

: nothing lacking, a participation in the hatred  
: the world and a participation in the Cross,  
*propterea odit vos mundus*'.

These are the adornments of the Bride. This  
the contract of alliance, dated at the hour of  
the Last Supper and sealed with the Eucharist,  
that settled the dowry of the Church, awaiting  
the nuptials of blood upon the Cross and the  
wedding embrace of Pentecost.

## THE PERSONALITY OF THE CHURCH

ET Unam, Sanctam, Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam. This fourth section of the Nicene Creed, by proclaiming the attributes or notes of the Church, ascribes to Her a personality and, so to say, makes Her stand out before us. Coming after the three first sections which treat of the Persons of the divine Trinity, this part of the Creed brings the personality of the Church in an emphatic way to the notice of our faith.

First of all, it was proper that the divine Being, the most universal and most personal of beings should be reflected in the Church. The Church must therefore have a character that is not only collective and universal, but also personal.

It was proper also that the Church should reflect the image of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, the most striking thing in which is the unique *rôle* of the divine Person with regard to the two natures of Christ.

And yet we say that it is the Holy Ghost

rather than Christ who makes the personality of the Church. For what reason? It goes without saying that the claim of the Holy Ghost is in no way exclusive with regard to the other divine Persons, '*opera Trinitatis sunt indivisa*': The works that the Trinity effects outside itself are produced undividedly by the three divine Persons. But precisely by attributing to the Holy Ghost that perfection of the Church which is personality we make clearer the meaning of the union and resemblance between the Church and Christ.

For if the Church must reproduce the mystery of the Incarnation together with the three terms that constitute it: the human nature, the divine nature and the divine Person—the Church must admit of three analogous terms: a human nature, a humanity which it receives from the multitude of its members and which comprises a body, the Church taught, and a soul,\* the Church teaching—a divine nature which Christ its Head and its Bridegroom confers upon it by raising it to the supernatural life, to participa-

\* From another point of view the *body* of the Church signifies its visible and hierarchic organism and the *soul* of the Church designates the supernatural life which flows through this great body and is able to pass invisibly from it to distant souls who are involuntarily deprived of the hierarchic influence of the Church.

tion in the nature and operations of God—finally, the Holy Ghost, the principle of love and cohesion between Christ and the Church, the principle of sanctification and of perfection, which seals, crowns and consummates their union, just as the Person of the Word seals the union of the two natures in Christ.

The establishment of this analogy is in no way contrary to the Patristic, theological and liturgical data which makes the Holy Ghost the soul of the Church. For to assimilate, as we have done, the action of the Holy Ghost in the Church to that of the Person of the Word in Christ is rather to amplify and bring out to its furthest limit the power of the analogy drawn from the vital principle or the soul.\* On the other hand, we only attribute the function of the soul to the teaching Church by virtue of the action of the Holy Ghost.

It will be seen that if the personality of the Church is an image, it is more than a metaphor. In precision, consistency, extent and richness, the notion goes beyond the concept of moral personality.

\* In this way, inversely, in the Athanasian Creed, the comparison of the soul is used with regard to the mystery of the Incarnation: *nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo; ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.*

In precision and consistency, first of all; for although the Church is composed of these elements that are so divine—Humanity, Christ and the Holy Ghost—and although from their union there can only result, philosophically speaking, an accidental or imperfectly substantial whole, nevertheless the bond which unites them, being a divine Person, confers upon their conjunction a unity, a stability, a rational and intelligent autonomy of a superior kind, which merits in a superior way, under a certain aspect, the name of personality. Or we should say rather that this personality is absolutely new and that the Church is its sole realization.\*

In extent and richness; for whilst ordinary moral personality is confined within the limits of a human group, the personality of the Church not only integrates in itself all the varieties of human individuals and can embrace an ever increasing number—not only manifests itself by an august authority and a majestic tradition, but is not conceivable apart from the Three Divine Persons. Its work is carried on within the sphere of the activity and life of God. It

\* See the fine article by R. P. Cathala, *Revue Thomiste*, April, 1913.

originates from a communication of the infinite Good which is second only to that of the hypostatic Union.

All that we can say about the personality of the Church will only illustrate this twofold superiority which we have recognized in Her.

Thus the divine Personality of the Church stands out from the fact that in the Church there is a more precise and consistent faculty of memory than in any other individual or collective personality. States have their traditions and their archives, bureaucracies their routine; but none of that explains the fidelity of the Church to its memories, and what memories!—as old as the world and held to be revelations and confidences from God. The Church refuses to date Her memoirs and Her autobiography later than the origin of the world. In the affirmation of the exactitude of Her memories, She pledges Her honour and Her existence; She pledges the salvation of the world. The tenacity and clarity of this memory is superhuman. The divine Revelation which is confided to Her will be well kept.

Even since the days of the Gospels, since that time when our Lord, authenticating by His teaching and miracles the ancient revelations and

fulfilling them in His own Revelation, gave to His Church the definitive deposit of the Truth, even since then, the memory of the Church has not ceased to stand out as prodigious, and it witnesses to a real and superior personality. Was not this deposit given to Her in a twofold form: in the written form of the inspired books and in the form of the oral teaching of the Apostles which the early Christian communities were to transmit through their Bishops, Doctors and Councils? And does not the fidelity of the Church to this twofold source bear witness to a unique and divine directive principle within Her? So delicate a discernment in following this twofold current and so great a vigour in resisting both those who contradicted the tradition and those who falsified the books, presupposes a memory that is miraculous but personal and which still endures. *'Ille vos docebit omnia et suggeret omnia.'*\* He will make you remember, as Bossuet puts it. *'Hanc praedicationem cum acceperit, et hanc fidem. . . Ecclesia, et quidem in universum mundum disseminata, diligenter custodit, quasi unam*

\* John xiv. 26. 'But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'



domum inhabitans; et similiter credit iis, videlicet quasi unam animam habens et unum cor; et consonanter haec praedicat et docet et tradit, quasi unum possidens os: Having received this (apostolic) preaching and this faith . . . the Church, although disseminated throughout the whole world, guards its deposit with a faithful care, as if in reality She had Her habitation in a single house; and She believes in these things in the same way—I mean, as if She had only a single heart and a single soul; and it is with the same unity that She preaches and teaches them and transmits them to future generations, as though She only possessed a single mouth.

Another sign of the Church's personality is Her conscience; and it is no less superhuman. Conscience is the internal habit of the first principles of morality: its characteristic is certitude. Let us then consider certitude in the Church, the divine certitude of Revelation and of Faith.

The conscience of the Church at the service of this divine certitude first shows itself in a most refined sensibility. She defines the degrees of certitude, She discerns its gradations. For whilst supernatural certitude is absolute and immutable in the case of those truths which are

strictly of faith, it breaks up, so to say, into various degrees in the data of Patristic Tradition and of Theological conclusions, according as the divine light is more or less sifted through human reasons which have been provoked by it. But that does not mean that the conscience of the Church has faltered. It is an example of its finesse and order. All the Church does is to graduate the strength of Her affirmations; She in no way relaxes it.

The conscience of the Church at the service of this divine certitude further shows itself as proud and indomitable. To contest this certitude is to betray the Church and to provoke Her anathema. It can be said that She is more concerned in maintaining the inviolability of this certitude with even greater energy than in maintaining the inviolability of Her morality; or rather, that She maintains the holiness of Her morality only through the sanctity of Her faith. And if an attempt is made to force the Church, even under pain of death, to disavow Her divine Certitude, then the Church accepts or commands martyrdom in order to affirm it all the more. The doctrine and example of martyrdom thus become the most distinctive sign of the invincible personality of the Church.

'Quapropter Ecclesia in omni loco, ob eam quam habet erga Deum dilectionem, multitudinem martyrum omni tempore praemittit ad Patrem': That is why the Church, in every place, because of Her love towards God, sends to the Father, in every age, the multitude of Her martyrs.\*

Augustine has told us how astounded he was when, whilst listening to Ambrose, he suddenly recognized this great personality of the Church. 'Confundebar et convertebar et gaudebam, Deus meus, quod Ecclesia tua unica, Corpus Unici tui, in qua mihi nomen Christi infanti est inditum, non saperet infantiles nugas': I was confounded and astounded and I rejoiced, O my God, to know that the wisdom of your only Church, the Body of your only Son, in Whom the name of Christ had been set upon me when I was a little child, did not consist of puerile futilities.

The diversity of the elements, Humanity, Christ and the Holy Ghost, which compose the being of the Church, do not introduce any confusion into it. These elements call for and support each other, just as in a heavenly body, the mass, the movement, the incandescence and

\* St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, Bk. iv., ch. xxx. 9.

the light. The mass is the collectivity of the baptized; the incandescence and the light is the vivifying action of Christ the Redeemer and Revealer; the movement is the Holy Ghost.

Historically, none of these elements is ever seen to operate without the others. A twofold fact is sufficient witness to their co-ordination and their harmony. The Church Teaching relies profoundly on the feeling of the Church Taught; sometimes even going so far as to borrow the material for Her definitions from it and allowing it to determine the time of their declaration. On the other hand, the action of Christ and of the Holy Ghost within the souls of those who are taught always shows itself dependent upon the ministry of the Church Teaching, or subordinated to its control. Nothing makes more evident the unity of spirit and the indivisible personality of the Church.

But it may be asked whether schisms and heresies do not bring disturbance into this order. On the contrary, they are like the fragmentary losses that flash off from the planets. The mass is in no way broken up, impeded, or obscured. And in order to judge the importance or insignificance of the removal of such

fragments, it would be necessary to be placed in the perspective of heaven.

It might be enquired further, why the action of Christ and of His Spirit in the Church is so dependent on circumstances, is subject to setbacks and entails the assistance of individuals which is so often unfortunate. Are there not intermittences in the development of a doctrine? And in this process may there not be found an alloy of materials of unequal and transitory value, in the preparation and reasons even for those acts that are most assuredly assisted by the Holy Ghost? We may content ourselves with answering that the obstacle from circumstances is quickly surmounted, that setbacks are quickly compensated for, and that the imperfect alloy from human assistance is quickly absorbed in the action of the Wisdom and Power that governs the Church. In the beginning the Spirit seemed to allow itself to be carried idly over the waters; but it was working upon the elements in view of the purpose of the ordaining fiat; in the same way it is not in reality idle when it seems to abandon the Church to the will of the waves of the times.

If the four Notes of the Church suggest its personality, it is because they are only fully

alive and only have all their force and meaning when they are understood in a personal sense. Give a consciousness and a memory to the Church and you will straightway hear this consciousness cry out its unity, you will see it elaborate and demand its holiness. The memory of Her apostolic origins prevents Her from forfeiting them; and since the deposit received from the apostles is definitive and cannot yield to any new economy, it is therefore also universal. The Church proclaims Herself Catholic and knows Herself to be indefectible.

There is a conclusion of extreme importance and my delay in mentioning it has only been apparent, for it runs through all that has been said and arises at the first affirmation of the personality of the Church: this personality cannot be conceived without a visible Head, without Peter and the Pope.

That by which the human person principally manifests and affirms itself is the voice which expresses through speech, better than any other organ, the thoughts and free decisions of the rational being. The audible Voice of the Church is the Pope.

The voice of the Church cannot be a book, not even an inspired book. It is hardly neces-

sary to be Plato in order to observe that it is the same with books as with pictures; they may seem to be alive, but if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence. 'Once written, the book circulates both amongst those who are alien to its spirit and amongst those who are competent. It has not the cunning to speak only to the right persons and it cannot defend itself.'\* The divine discretion and the mystery of an inspired book only make it more exposed to the affront of contradictory interpretations.

When a man is immature his voice is indistinct; but the more his organism develops and consolidates itself, the more expressive and personal his voice becomes. In this lies the whole reason and the entire history of papal authority in the Church; it has been progressive, but from the start it has been formal and continuous.

\* *Phedrus*, 273.

# THE HIERATIC LIFE OF THE CHURCH

HIERATIC or sacerdotal—this is the fundamental qualification of the office which the Church fulfils between God and men.

At the moment when, according to the great description of St. Paul, the Lord Jesus made His glorious entry into heaven, there to complete, as though in His final temple, His sacerdotal function: *‘Non enim in manufacta Sancta introivit, sed in ipsum coelum . . . semel oblatus’*: for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us . . . after having been once offered\*—then also the Church appeared in the world in the splendour of the insignia of the Priesthood, in order to continue on earth this same function inseparably with Him.

But note well that the Lord Jesus had been a Priest from the beginning and during every

\* Heb. ix. 24-28.



moment of His mortal life through the anticipated acts of His Heart. He was to continue to be so in all things in His Church and in a visible manner. This is the full realization of the '*sacrificium et oblationem noluisti*': Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. . . . Then said I, Lo I come.\*

For in fact, everything in the Church is founded on sacrifice. And first of all, Her hierarchic constitution, which is so called because the aptitude for the various Orders which compose it is given by the Sacrament which confers the power of Sacrifice.

All Her other functions are only a prolongation of Her Priesthood. Her Teaching has no other object than to make known to the world the divine Plan of Redemption through Sacrifice. Her Prayer is only the preparation or the accompaniment or the thanksgiving of Her Sacrifice. Her charitable and apostolic action is only directed towards the universal and continual application of the merits and the fruits of the Sacrifice.

How far the natural priesthood of man in Creation is here surpassed! As a member of the mystical Body of Christ every baptized

\* Ps. xxxix. 7.

person becomes a concelebrant of the Unique Sacrifice, together with the Church and Christ. Unde et memores nos servi tui sed et plebs tua sancta.\* This participation in the Priesthood of the Church (and the baptized person has also his part, although it is sometimes unobserved, in those prolongations of the Priesthood mentioned above) henceforth constitutes his true royalty. 'Gens sancta, regale sacerdotium': A holy race, a royal priesthood.†

Let us draw this inference to its conclusion and not fear to say that in the life of the Church this hieratic characteristic is dominant and dominating and even exclusive.

Dominant. In the outlook of the primitive Church it forms the most marked and distinctive trait. The heavenly Liturgy of the Lamb in the Apocalypse is only the prophetic transposition of what really took place in the Mysteries. The Apostles who were men of the Temple and of prayer in common remained, in the distant Communities they founded, Hierarchs in the full magnificence of the meaning which St. Denis at a later date attached to this word and this office. And it was not only the

\* Canon of the Mass.

† 1 Peter ii. 9.

first priests and deacons, but also the early Christian laity who shared, by day and night, with the Apostles, this canonical life whose luminous centre is the Altar.

Who will dare to say that this hieratic life of the primitive Church was an accidentally realized Utopia—or simply a perfection too lofty for the exigencies of study and the necessities of action to allow us to tend towards it still. Knowledge which would totally turn us from it would be nothing more than a vain humanism; and action which detaches us from it is nothing more than individualism. Much study and much action are doubtless necessary; but much study and much action have, often, in no way the value of a High Mass.

By right, as well as in fact, the hieratic characteristic is dominant in the life of the Church, because having an entirely divine sense of the rights of the divine Majesty—*Offerimus praeclarae Majestati tuae*, She says in the Canon—the Church not only gives to the virtue of religion that pre-eminence over the other moral virtues which belongs to it, but She also amplifies it and exalts its practice. She wants it to be complete, *i.e.*, sensible and apparent as well as interior; She wants it to be collective and

official; She ensures its continuity and its daily regularity; She attaches pomp and splendour to it.

Thus the religion of the Church continues and fulfils the very religion of the Soul of Christ and communicates it to the most material of realities.

Dominating. This it is in truth. That which the Church imposes uniquely upon the world, that which She has the greatest difficulty in getting the world to accept, and that by which She conquers, is Her Priesthood, is the mediating and universal necessity of Her intervention. In Her history, immediately after the doctrinal conflicts come the conflicts for the dignity and independence of the priesthood. The action of the greatest and holiest of the Popes was only so powerful and fruitful because they acted as Pontiffs. The Bishops and the Monks made no claim first to civilize the Barbarians in order to convert them; they baptized them in order to civilize them. No pact, no concordat established such strong and living bonds between the Church and the Kings as the fact of their Consecration. On the other hand, what the Princes most envied was the divine right of the Church and Her empire over consciences. In our days

again the unique support of civilizations that are threatened or half disrupted with anarchy, is what remains to them of the Sacraments which, consecrating private and public functions, the years and the great dates of human life, conserve its morality and its sanity, even if we can no longer add, its holiness. So that, as in other ages, the source of our civilizations is always a baptistery, and through that the Priesthood.

It is evident that what the enemies of the Church would so much like to see Her abdicate, but what the world would not pardon Her for forgetting, is Her Priesthood.

Exclusive. This the hieratic character must be if it is true that every participation in the Sacrifice of Christ, even though it be remote, makes the Christian, in some degree, a victim: 'offerens et oblatio', like Christ Himself. The priest and the baptized layman are, though unequally, separated persons, not indeed from the simple necessity of individual ascetism, but because they are, though unequally, consecrated persons, and from the active and passive immolation of Christ into Which they have entered.\*

\* 'Ped hoc et sacerdos est, Ipse offerens, Ipse et oblatio. Cuius rei sacramentum quotidianum esse voluit ecclesiae Sacrificium: quae, cum Ipsius capitis corpus sit, seipsam ped ipsum discit offerre.' St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, lib. x,

The priest exiles his heart in the solitude of the vow; and how many other renunciations of worldly superfluities have been suggested to him by the tonsure which gives him a more virile bearing! He has no need to wait for experiencing the fact that in certain places his presence is impossible and his action without import, in order to steep his zeal uniquely in the strength of the mission and the spirit, to feed his soul from the vigour of the sacred rites and to let his life radiate from the flame of his sacrifice. There is nothing in common here with the whim of ritualism: it is quite simply the *Imitamini quod tractatis*.

Every Christian is put on his guard by his Baptism against the *saecularia desideria*,\* against conformity with the world,† and he is ceaselessly warned that he is ‘crucified with Christ.’

Such is the strength, the extent, the exigency of the hieratic characteristic in the life of the Church; such is the union of the Church with Christ the Priest, the identity between the

ch. xx. (It is thus that Christ is a priest, being Himself He Who offers the oblation, and Himself the oblation that is offered. This is a mystery which He willed to make the daily Sacrifice of the Church: which being the body of which He Himself is the Head, learns through Him to offer itself.)

\* Titus ii. 12.

† Rom. xii. 2.

Hierarchy and the Priesthood, the dependence of common and private Prayer, and even of the individual virtues, upon the Sacrifice and the sacramental Mysteries. And with this, two glorious facts are seen to stand out. The first of these facts is the fidelity of the Church to the memory which Her Bridegroom asked Her to keep of Him: *haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis*. All the ancient fragments that we find in the various Liturgies are nothing else than the trace left in the memory and heart of the Church by the first Liturgy of Holy Thursday. This divine emotion may be felt in rapid and tender phrases like those words of the Canon: *Accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas*, the testimony of an eyewitness, a personal memory, an assuredly apostolic insertion.

But this faithful and sensitive memory of the Church inspires and animates all Her life. Her widowhood is not a mourning, although it has all its pathos; Her union is not the glorious presence, but it has all its brightness and constant ardour.

The other fact is the living efficacy of Her rites. The hieratic life of the Church, Her Liturgy, even supposing it was not founded upon the

Sacraments, would still be the greatest of the Sacramentals. That Christians can be found who see in it only a system of symbols and who throw on its external and material element the discredit of being inopportune and boring, is an incomprehensible error. We have seen that the hieratic characteristic must penetrate after the manner of a principle into all the other vital functions of the Church. The hieratic life is the entry into the different mysteries of the life of Christ and their reproduction. The long Feria or feast which the life of priests ought to be, and whose leisure the Church wishes to extend to all the faithful, is no more inactive than the eternal leisure of God. 'Pater meus usque modo operatur et ego operor': My Father worketh hitherto and I work.\* Troubled by the tumult of earthly cupidities and worn out by the intellectual fevers of the times, the leisure of the soul, the best and finest of our joys, will soon be only possible within the Church.

It is only in pagan hieratic life that inertia, cold conventionality, idleness, puerility and ugliness are found. The Ritual of the blessings of the Church makes hieratic with a supple optimism, with an equal sense of their utilities and their

\* John v. 17.



dangers, of their beauty and their possible profanation, makes the multitude of material creatures and all human industries hieratic. The Church brings all these things under the salutary influence of Her Sacrifice: She achieves their detailed and continual redemption. *'Ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei'*: The material creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption to have a part in the glorious liberty of the children of God.\*

It is true that men commonly attribute an essential immobility to the hieratic life. This is doubtless an excessive indication of the reflection of the divine Immutability and Majesty which the Priesthood bears. Or it may be a feeling resulting from the cessation of the bloody and animal circumstances of the Mosaic Sacrifice and from the infinite dignity of the new and unique Victim. It is by this feeling that the opulent rigidity of Byzantine art is justified and moves us. Still more majestic is the description of the High Priest in the Missal (in the Mass *Statuit* for a Bishop and Confessor): *Ecce sacerdos magnus qui in diebus suis placuit Deo et inventus est justus. . . .* The description is taken from the

\* Rom. viii. 21.

greatest of the ancient Patriarchs in order to form the perfect image of the hieratic personality of the Church. But it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews that this personality takes on the fullness of its sacred character, is animated by and identified with Christ: '*Considerate apostolum et pontificem confessionis nostrae . . . amplioris enim gloriæ præ Moyse est habitus*': Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus. . . . He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.\*

This divine vitality of the Priesthood is the source of the incorruptible youth of the Church, of the virginal purity of Her faith in Her Bridegroom. '*Propter hoc Dominus in capite suo accepit unguentem, ut Ecclesiae spiret incorruptionem. Ne ungamini tetro odore doctrinae principis huius sæculi*': The Lord has received the holy anointing upon His head in order to communicate to His Church a spirit of incorruptibility. Do not be anointed with the fetid odour of the doctrine of the prince of this world.† It is a matter of experience that the hieratic and liturgical life is eminently refreshing for the soul and inspiring for the mind. And

\* Heb. iii. 1-3.

† St. Ignatius of Antioch, Eph. xvii.

this is most natural; for it is in Her hieratic function that the Church is fully invested with the power of the divine good pleasure. 'The Holy Ghost,' notes Bossuet, 'admires Her down to the fringes of Her robes: in fimbriis aureis. . . . Everything in the Church breathes forth a holy love and this love is reciprocated in the heart of the Bridegroom'\* But it is in the Sacrifice that these exchanges take place and that this divine union is renewed. One may well believe that if the True Priesthood was instituted in the fullness of time this was in order to show that the Church is exempt from both archaism and decadence and that the first fruits of Her oblation can never wither. For God loves what is ancient, but not what is antique. 'Comedetis vetustissima veterum, et vetera novis supervenientibus projicietis'†: And ye shall eat old store and bring forth the old because of the new.

Being a fountain of youth and purity the hieratic life is thus a source of joy—a joy that communicates itself and spreads like a balm—*unxit te Deus oleo laetitiae*—a joy that bursts forth and sings. The Christian life, in its most intimate actions, is a song. 'Sicut in locutionibus

\* *Pensées Chrét. et morales*, Lebarq. vi.

† Lev. xxvi. 10.

exterioribus, secundum melodiam et proportionem prolatis, resultat cantus sensibilis; ita in locutionibus interioribus et etiam affectionibus, secundum proportionem et ordinem debitum ad Deum directis, resultat quaedam melodia spiritualis et quidam cantus intelligibilis': Just as from external words uttered according to the proper melody and proportion there results an audible song, so from the interior words of the intelligence and from the affections of the heart, directed towards God according to the due proportion and order, there results a certain spiritual melody and a certain song of the intellect.\*

But this account is incomplete. The Christian life is a song for many voices; it is symphonic. When twice over St. Paul recommends us to sing, he means that the soul should share itself and multiply. 'Loquentes vobismetipsis in psalmis et in hymnis; commonentes vosmetipsos psalmis, hymnis. . . .': Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.† . . . In all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.‡ . . . But above all there is God; God, by Whose

\* Second Commentary of St. Thomas on the Song of Songs. Prologue.

† Eph. v. 19.

‡ Col. iii. 16.

movement all the powers of the soul are set in motion in this symphony; God Whom, we dare to add, Himself sings within us, since He prays and groans within us.\* How should the Church not sing? If every Christian soul is a song, the Church is the Song of Songs, the home of divine music, the prelude of the eternal symphonies. If peace is the tranquillity of order, song is its jubilation: it is the enthusiastic rapture of charity and unity. 'Nam memorabile vestrum presbyterium, dignum Deo, ita coaptatum est Episcopo ut chordae citharae. Propter hoc in consensu vestro et concordi charitate Jesus Christus canitur. Sed et vos singuli chorus estote, ut, consoni par concordiam, melos Dei recipientes in unitate, cantete voce una per Jesum Christum Patri . . .': For the college of your priests, memorable and worthy of God, is attuned to the Bishop, as the strings are to the harp. That is why in the harmony of your souls and your charity Jesus Christ is being sung. Now do each of you join in this choir, that being harmoniously in concord you may receive the melody of God in unison and sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father. . . .†

\* Rom. viii. 26.

† St. Ignatius of Antioch, Eph. iv.

Further, the necessity of singing and the excellence of this song are one of the distinctive glories of the Church. An apologia, 'De adventu Messiae praeterito': That the coming of the Messiah has already taken place, written about 1070 by a convert Jew of Morocco, brings out this mark of divine institution from the fact that the music of the Synagogue has passed into the Church which alone sings the new and universal song demanded by the Prophets.\*

What has just been said gives the reasons for the insistence, the slowness and even lengthiness of the Prayer, the Praise and the greater part of the hieratic functions of the Church. In them She seems to lose the sense of earthly time and the impact of urgent contingencies, even when She is supplicating for present needs. She seems to wish to be only the indefinite echo of the Memory of Her Bridegroom which She is celebrating—or to bury Herself in the depths of endless adoration before the Majesty of God. O Altitudol O Bonitas, the Church never finishes from going from the one to the other. This is because true contemplation is of its nature insistent and continual; it absorbs and fixes the

\* Article by R. P. Dom. J. Rabory in the *Univers*, 10th July, 1912.

soul in its object. But in Her hieratic life it is precisely an entirely divine gift of contemplation and wisdom that the Church is putting into practice; and, in its turn, the hieratic life supports and feeds this gift. Even less than Mary, sitting at the feet of the Lord, can the Church detach Herself from this better part.

These relations between the hieratic life and the gift of Contemplation and Wisdom, this illuminated and illuminating characteristic of the hieratic life, has never been more clearly stated than by St. Denis. "The principle of the Hierarchy is the Trinity. . . . In the depths of its excellence and of its infinite goodness this indivisible Trinity determines to save every intelligent creature, the Angels and Men."\* The Hierarchy is at once order, knowledge and action, conforming itself, as far as it can, to the divine attributes and reproducing by its unique splendour an expression, as it were, of the things that are in God. . . . Contemplating the super-eminent Beauty with an untroubled eye, it retraces it in itself so far as it is able, and transforms its adepts into so many images of God.† Doubtless it is the angelic hierarchies that are

\* De Hier. eccles., i.

† De Hier. cael., iii.

here primarily indicated; but in the thought of the great hieratic Doctor, every created hierarchy participates in this same perfection, for he adds :

‘Thus by the word hierarchy we understand a certain arrangement and holy order, the image of the uncreated Beauty, celebrating in its own sphere, with the degree of power and knowledge that belongs to it, the illuminating mysteries. . . . The perfection of the members of the Hierarchy is to draw near to God by a courageous imitation, and, what is still more sublime, to make themselves His co-operators, as the Scriptures say, and to make the wonders of the divine action shine out from them.’\* And he expressly applies this magnificent trait to the ecclesiastical hierarchy: ‘Whilst the outsider has only considered the material veils of the Mystery, the Hierarch, ever united to the Holy Ghost, has raised himself to understand the intellectual symbols of the ceremonies in the quietness of a sublime contemplation and with a purity which belongs to the glory of the pontifical dignity.’†

It is now easy to arrange in four precise propositions the essential elements of the hieratic life of the Church:

\* De Hier. cael., iii.

† De Hier. eccles., iii.



(1) The Church in Her Sacramental Office takes on the person of God. She is united to the Father, the divine Abraham, in order to immolate the Son; with the Son, She is immolated to the Father. She engenders to the divine Life, She pardons, She saves, She imprints eternal characteristics.

(2) The Church by Her Prayer and Her Praise assists the Divine Majesty. She binds and tests Her Prayer and Praise upon Her Sacrifice and thus these acquire the same value for adoration as a victim. '*Per Ipsum ergo offeramus hostiam laudis semper Deo*': Through Him we offer an unending sacrifice of praise to God.\*

Sacrifice and Praise, the hours of the day and the watches of the night, She connects them all to the liturgy of Eternity.

(3) The Church diffuses the power of God. By Her blessings, Her exorcisms, Her sacramentals, She cleanses the world not with holy water but with the Blood of Christ. And by diffusing the power of God She diffuses joy, a divine joy, everywhere.

(4) In Her hieratic life the Church reproduces the mysteries of the life of the incarnate God. Before being imitated by individual souls, the

\* *Heb. xiii. 15.*

mysteries of the life of Christ are signified and reproduced in the Sacraments and the Liturgy. The graces of prayer and the mystical states have their type and source in the hieratic life of the Church; they are a refraction in the Members of the Image of Christ which is perfect in the whole Body. Participation in the hieratic life of the Church would thus seem to be almost an end in itself, or at least as the supreme means towards the particular considerations of private prayer, since it is the sure entry into the particular mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ. To attempt, on this account, to over-simplify individual discipline in the virtues would, doubtless, be illusory and rash. But this reproach, even when justly incurred, would not in any way prove that the whole life of the Church terminates in individual asceticism. It would prove that every participation in the mysteries of the Church and of Christ presupposes certain results already acquired in the sphere of the virtues, and that its precise work is to elevate the virtue acquired by the individual to its perfection, to its utmost efficiency and joy.

Finally, the Teaching of the Church, which in early days was distributed from the Altar by

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homily and catechesis at the same time as the Eucharistic Bread, remains, in a less apparent but quite as real manner, dependent upon Her hieratic life—just as the Contemplation of the Church depends equally upon that life.

## THE GIFT OF PROPHECY IN THE CHURCH

THE gift of prophecy, taken in the great meaning given to it by St. Paul and St. Thomas, has always existed in the Church because She has always needed a supernatural magisterium. The ministry of the Prophets was a doctrinal office; and the doctrinal magisterium of the Church remains a prophetic office. *Qui locutus est per Prophetas*: that continues to be true, but in an even more perfect way.\*

It seems that the prophetic assistance has been

\* The gift of prophecy is not only the prevision and prediction of a future event; its object can be every truth arising from the knowledge of God alone, and consequently supernatural and distant. It is necessary to note why St. Thomas carefully underlines this last word (*Ut procul existentis*, IIa, IIae, clxxiv. 5). It enables him to enlarge the definition of prophecy, either by including in it all the kinds of vision, starting with the dream, which is a mixture of material images (clxxiv. 3), or, on the contrary, by bringing into it the highest kinds of intellectual vision, which always remain a distant form of knowledge (clxxiv. 2)—and even the exceptional enlightenments of the direct vision of God, like the rapture of St. Paul, which, not being produced, *per modum formae immanentis*, lack the fullness, the corporeal effect of the rebounding splendour of the heavenly glory: *Ideo talis raptus aliquo modo ad prophetiam pertinet* (clxxv. 3).

necessary to the Church even simply to maintain the reality of the human and visible side of the Incarnation. 'The Church,' notes Pascal, 'has had as much difficulty in showing that Jesus Christ was man against those who denied it, as in showing that He was God. . . .' But Prophecy, in the Church, goes much further than that.

From the days of the Old Testament the Prophets were not only concerned with the announcement of the Redemption and the prediction of other future events, but also with a body of truly supernatural teaching which referred to the Redemption and which came to them from God in the twofold form in which Prophecy is communicated: sometimes by the infusion of new notions, *i.e.*, by revelation—sometimes by a simple illumination which makes them judge supernaturally notions already revealed or naturally known, and this is inspiration.

These three elements: prediction, revelation, inspiration, fill, although in very unequal proportions, the Sacred Books. The first two are scattered and intermittent; inspiration alone is constant from the first to the last word.

In the New Testament our Lord centralizes

in Himself, if one may so put it, the gift of Prophecy: the beatific vision and infused knowledge gave His soul every illumination of heaven and earth. With regard to Revelation, He retained its function exclusively. 'Omnia quaecumque audiui a Patre meo, nota feci vobis': All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.\* No really new truth of the supernatural order will be communicated after Him; and no one after Him will be a revealer. With regard to Prediction, our Lord, while remaining the greatest Seer and the chief prophet of the destinies of His Church, nevertheless communicates a certain prevision of Her destinies to His Apostles, *e.g.*, to St. John in the Apocalypse. But these visions of the future are very restricted because they are now less necessary to the Church who possesses the divine reality.†

But it is through inspiration that the Lord Jesus shares His supreme gift of Prophecy with the Church: through Inspiration He safeguards and keeps perpetually living in Her all that He has revealed.

This inspiration is manifested from the

\* John xv. 15.

† *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, xciv. 2, ad. 3.

beginning of the apostolic era and henceforth in the whole life of the Church by those two great organs: the Writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles, a witness of the Revelation of the Lord sealed by the Holy Ghost Himself—the oral and living Magisterium of the Church, which, creating a tradition parallel to that of the Scriptures, not only judges the meaning of Scripture, but fixes the revealed content of that tradition, with a divine authority.

Therefore just as the providential action which conserves beings is only the prolongation of the creative action which produces them, so in the Church, Inspiration is only the prolongation of the Revelation and light which is in Christ.

This light which enlightens the magisterium of the Church is thus the grace of the 'interpretatio sermonum' — the interpretation of tongues, the gift of understanding and expounding what God says—but in an immensely amplified form. This is a real form of prophecy\* and one that dates not only from the first Christian assemblies, nor even from the day when the risen Lord gave the Apostles the understanding of the Scriptures,† but from the

\* *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, clxxiii. 2, clxxvi. 2, 4.

† Luke xxiv,

moment when Peter received his personal and supreme prerogatives.

This prophetic light continues the divine thought of Christ within the Church. And it is especially in this sense that Prophecy in the New Testament excels that of the Old. Through it the Church judges those mysterious truths which are God's peculiar secret, with clarity and firmness.

The privilege of inerrance or infallibility guaranteed to the magisterium of the Church cannot then be understood in a purely negative and passive sense which would represent God as only intervening just in time to prevent a mishap. The magisterium of the Church proceeds by positive judgements which imply a profound intelligence, an unlimited discernment. Taken simply in themselves, the formulæ in which the Church sets the diamond of Dogma, are wonderful works. How much more precious is the judgement which they contain! This is the lofty form of Prophecy which makes the Church a prodigious contemplative. 'Manifestatio divinae veritatis per nudam contemplationem': The most elevated form of prophecy, says St. Thomas, is that which manifests the divine truth by the



pure and naked contemplation of that same truth.\*

This excellence of the gift of Prophecy proper to the Church, stands out so startlingly in certain definitions that they almost seem to be a new revelation. This is because these Truths that are defined, being founded on the certitude of divine faith, receive from the judgement of the Church a precision and force that completes their notion and develops the understanding of them. 'Judicium est principalius in prophetia, quia est completivum cognitionis': Judgement is the principal element in prophecy, because it is that which brings knowledge to its completion—St. Thomas. A relative revelation, if you like. The diamond is always the same, but one or other of its facets scintillates with a new fire.

The dogmatic judgements of the Church cannot bring us a discovery in the strict sense, or a new revelation. Still less, since the coming of the Saviour, can those Saints who throughout the ages have been favoured with the gift of prophecy.† The unique Revealer is the Lord

\* *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, clxxiv. 2.

† According to the teaching of St. Thomas the prophecies under the new Law are given not to make God better known (Jesus, from this point of view, having consummated all

Jesus. Everything that is inspired or defined or prophesied after Him, is related to His Revelation, at least as a conclusion is related to its principle. Even the revelation which Peter received at the moment when he confessed the Son of God at Cæsarea Phillipi was not independent of the Lord. It was the Father Who gave it to him, but not without its passing through the Son. Jesus's question which brought out the confession gave the necessary light and grace; flesh and blood were alien to it, but not the presence nor the voice of the Lord. Even there, even at that early moment, Jesus is the Revealer.

Thus to assimilate the magisterium of the Church to the gift of Prophecy is not to diminish it; on the contrary, it indicates its superiority even over the Scriptures.

Even more than the Scriptures, it recalls and continues the teaching of the Lord, which was oral and living. Further, it seems more necessary for the conservation and understanding of the Scriptures than the Scriptures are necessary to it itself. Finally the magisterium of the

revelation), but for a practical purpose, in order to direct human actions, *ad directionem actuum humanorum* (IIa, IIæ, clxiv. 6, ad. 3).

Church, far more than the Sacred Books which are inspired once for all, is an instrument of development and of doctrinal progress.

It is precisely because it is a prophetic gift of wide extent that the magisterium of the Church is even able to penetrate certain truths of the natural order in close co-ordination with the revealed Truths: it decides, for example, philosophical questions such as that of substance and accidents, or that of the soul as the substantial form of the body. It can judge in the same way of the reality of certain historical facts which are the occasion or the basis of its definitions.

It will be seen what a superior measure of prophetic light such a judgement, bearing upon the relation between an object that is naturally knowable and revealed Truth, demands. In the natural knowledge imparted to Solomon there was only an inferior form of prophecy. It was indeed given by a divine illumination, but it had no relation to truths of the revealed order.\*

In individual souls prophecy is only a transitory seizure by the divine Truth.† In the

\* *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, clxxiv. 3.

† Per modum cujusdam passionis, vel impressionis transeuntis, clxxi. 2.

Church it is a permanent and habitual gift and it bears witness not to the remote influence or the fugitive visitation of the Holy Ghost, but to the intimate presence, the calm and stable action of the Holy Ghost which confers upon the Church Her supernatural personality. It bears no resemblance to a magic trance; it is the normal function of a being who possesses continuous and consistent thought and who expresses it. The Church knows under what conditions She can use this gift and She is sure of possessing it always.

Through this permanent and habitual characteristic the gratuitous gift or charism of prophecy in the Church offers an analogy with the gifts of the Holy Ghost that are habitual in every Christian.

And this analogy with the gifts immediately opens up others that are more profound.

For the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by their very nature, present a peculiarly interesting problem. Although their function is to make us receptive to rather exceptional divine movements and to actions which go beyond the measure or mean of ordinary acts of virtue, nevertheless their usage is in no sense rare.

Not only fervent desires, but necessity such as that of a violent temptation can multiply the occasions for their activity. It is difficult, for example, to estimate how exceptional the dispositions or circumstances in the case of an impulse of fervour or distress in temptation would have to be, in order to call for the exercise of the gift of fortitude. And further, the Christian soul, rendered mobile by these gifts, and capable also of calling for this divine action when it needs it, is an instrument that can be used by the Holy Ghost in a continuous way. Now in a similar way to all this, the Church, while clearly exercising the gift of prophecy by the solemn acts of its extraordinary magisterium, does not, however, limit this exercise to the definitions of the Truths of divine faith alone, nor only to the infallible documents of its universal magisterium.

Prophetic inspiration is also present, though more mysteriously, in the ordinary magisterium of the Church. It there maintains that penetrating and firm sense of supernatural Truth, the *sensus Ecclesiae*, to which the baptismal instinct of the faithful joyfully responds: it suggests preferences which give a valuable lead in discussions and controversies; it brings out

the luminous points by which canonical discipline and piety are enlightened.

Hence in the exercise of the gift of Prophecy that is proper to the Church there is an almost infinite extent and diversity of objects.

We may also see an extension of the gift of Prophecy in the multitude of secondary prerogatives that mark either the physiognomy of the Church, or Her ordinary teaching, or Her public and social action with a stamp of excellence that is otherwise inexplicable.

Certain gratuitous gifts (charisms), which may be separated from Prophecy in individual souls, are thus ranged under its dependence and flow from it, when it is a question of the Church.

The Church possesses a very sure discernment of spirits: *discretio spirituum*.\* She is never wearied of pursuing, unmasking and exorcising the action of the evil spirit.

By the divine creation of the apostolate, whose source is in the Church, human speech has become invested with a new *rôle* and characteristic which have turned it into a force for salvation and holiness: '*sermo sapientiae*'†:

\* *Ila, Ilae, clxxi.*

† *Ibid., clxxvii.*

The gift of teaching wisdom by enlightening minds and moving hearts.

The Church is the source of life for the most solitary and hidden virtues; She discovers sanctity in the obscurity and silence of a tomb; She obtains from God the attestation of that sanctity by a miracle; she canonizes it; these are so many ways for Her to exercise the 'operatio virtutum': the gift of achieving supernatural effects or miracles.

All these gifts are in the Church as annexes of prophetic Inspiration.

If after this we consider moral science, not in its revealed and solemnly defined elements, but in so far as it is the object of the ordinary teaching of the Church, must we not admit the influence of a divine and prophetic light in that process of perfection which the Church brings to it? For it is not enough to say that the Church has a genius for moral science; She has reinforced that science by Dogma and made it a supernatural, a theological science. Whilst in individual souls the charisms and the gifts of the Holy Ghost belong to two quite distinct orders,\* we here find Prophecy expanding, as it

\* The charisms are given essentially for the utility of others, the gifts for the immanent operations of the subject. But if

were, into the gift of Counsel, in the moral teaching of the Church.

Consider also in the Church the mastery of Her direction in asceticism and spirituality, Her unique competence in the understanding and organization of the life of perfection, the secret She possesses of harmonizing the interests of the present life with our supernatural end, Her wonderful competence in the matter of education, a competence that is demanded both by Her maternal universality and by Her illuminating mission—and finally the quality of psychological finesse which, added to Her age-long experience, makes Her, when necessary, the first diplomatic power in the world. And in all this it is the gift of Knowledge which, in the Church, is mingled with the gift of Counsel.

But, above all, even in Her ordinary teaching, the Church has what may be called—on account of its certainty and directness—an intuitive sense of the revealed Truths. Hence Her basic and fundamental devotion to the great mysteries and Her insistence in inculcating, in recalling

we consider the communal person of the Church that which goes out to the good of the members remains immanent to the body itself. Unlike the charisms the gifts are a kind of *habitus*. But the charism of prophecy is in the Church, as was noted above, in an habitual state.



the essential terms which constitute their notion—and Her art and inclination to bring them continually into Her prayers. Hence the dogmatic justification of Her devotions and Her concern to honour in each of the Saints a reflection of Christ the exemplar. The great mysteries are for Her, not only the mountain ranges which close Her horizon and whose lines, gilded with eternal light, are ever before Her eyes; they are the elements and the nourishment of Her life.

There is then nothing to wonder at, if the Church is essentially Contemplative; if She has created within Her depths a wonderful spring of prayer in which praise plays the greatest part; if everything that participates in Her life is marked with a grace of unction, with tenderness and joy, with the note of Paradise.

These are the prolonged effects of the gift of Prophecy in the Church; one can see their analogy with the individual gifts of Understanding, Piety and Wisdom; not only an analogy of equivalence, but of excellence.

## THE CHURCH: THE THEBAID AND THE CITY

MAN needs both the City and solitude. Heresy destroys the city and makes solitude fearful. The Church, the perfect city, is also the Thebaïd of souls. In the movement of a great city a man feels at once more solitary and more human. How much more truly in the Church does one belong at the same time to one's self and to all!

Away from the Church solitude leads to one or other of the two individualist extremes that Pascal sees in Epictetus and in Montaigne. "The one (Epictetus), knowing the duty of man and unaware of his impotency, loses himself in presumption; . . . the other (Montaigne), knowing his impotency and not his duty, falls into baseness."\*

True solitude is not a dream country, the refuge of disenchantment, the fatherland of obsession. It is the forgetfulness of self, death to self, but in order to find God and one's self.

\* *Entretien avec M. de Saci.*

It brings into bloom the whole of that personality with which Baptism has endowed us: 'Ego flos campi et lilium convallium': I am the flower of the fields and the lily of the valley.

*a common attitude* — Outside the Church the error of individualism also leads to a kind of moral fatalism. Human beings are ranged into two equally irreformable classes, the good and the bad. Or if comppenetration between the good and the evil is admitted, it is from indifference. There is no real belief in the passage from good to evil, in the transformation from sin to sanctity. It is through the solitude proper to the Church that this change is effected, through the solitude of the soul with God.

The Church alone can isolate us from the world and lead us to the desert, without ignoring our most imperious personal needs, because She alone possesses and teaches the true notion of personality and therefore reveals to us our real aspirations and our most personal needs. Endlessly and in a thousand ways, the Church inculcates and recalls that if the human being is individuated by matter, he is nevertheless only a person, only becomes somebody, by crowning himself with reason and liberty. If therefore his

instincts are sufficient to develop his individuality, his personality, on the contrary, only grows through spiritual liberty.\* But it is one of the main activities of the Church to reveal to us our supernatural personality and to manifest its source.

The Church, as the Thebaid of souls, not only isolates us from the world where the tyrannical reign of cupidity is organized; not only possesses as Her own the doctrine, the spirit and the grace of recollection, humility and penitence, which are, as it were, the avenues of the desert along which our spiritual being escapes into liberty and purity, but She also makes us free from the whole of nature. She gives us the sense of the absolute insufficiency of created reality with regard to our End and our Beatitude and at the same time She supplements nature by new faculties which enable us to reach God.

Thus it is the Mystery of the Church which definitely exalts the personality of the Christian: 'You have made me, O Lord, powerful and solitary.' This mystery is multiplied as often as anyone is baptized. 'Despondi enim vos uni

\* Cf. *Le Sens commun et la Philosophie de l'Étre*. Garrigou-Lagrange, 2nd ed., pp. 332-333.

viro virginem castam exhibere Christo'\*: I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. Each of us is the Church and makes the Church, since each is building up the Body of Christ.† It is each of us who gives this Body its glorious clothing. 'Datum est illi ut cooperiat se byssino splendenti et candido. Byssinum enim justificationes sunt sanctorum'‡: To her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clear and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

The very universality of the precept of charity which at first sight seems to go against our need of solitude, of intimacy, of free choice, in reality fortifies and increases our true personality. It contributes more than our predilections to the enrichment of our spiritual person. Just as God makes Himself the good of all His creatures because He is and remains in Himself the sovereign good, so Charity makes of us, in a small way, the good of all, because it first makes us good ourselves. Far from dissipating and dispersing us in the crowd, Charity

\* 2 Cor. xi. 2.

† Eph. ii. 21, 22.

‡ Apoc. xix. 8.

guarantees and protects the unity of our being; for we love others similarly to ourselves and not equally. Unity, St. Thomas explains, is the principle of union; love of ourselves, according to God, is that unity, the principle of our union with others.\* In order to find in ourselves the type and norm for our love for others, we must have something perfect within us to love.

The spirit of retreat and of silence which has always flourished in the Church, finds there its rule and its measure at the same time as its stimulus and its attraction. Its true measure—between the fear which sees in solitude a jail and the enthusiasm which looks to it as a Thabor. Founded on Truth and Charity, the Church encourages solitude in order that the soul, rediscovering the exemplar according to which it was created, may render glory and love to God. Founded on the Word, the Church only encourages silence in so far as it enables the soul to hear God speaking and teaches it how to speak.† This is why all solitude has a discipline and a measure.

\* *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, xxvi. 4.

† In a Swedish tale of Mme. H. Nyblom, a prince, wearied of the noises of the Court, goes in search of Silence, finds it in a remote solitude, succeeds in making it speak, and returns, strengthened, to his royal duties. The reality, for the Christian who practises solitude, is far more striking.

At the same time the powerful attraction of the graces of contemplation is permanent in the Church. It takes hold of souls at the beginning of their conversion through the self-oblation of repentance or the imperious silence of adoration. How many others does it attract by the great luminous ways of the monastic life or the peaceful paths of private prayer towards the single-hearted search for God, 'ad deiformam quamdam unitatem,' as St. Denis says!\* Sometimes the spirit of retreat blows so strongly that it is like a race to the desert; then the world takes its revenge for having been despised by so many souls, 'quibus dignus non erat,'† by penetrating into the solitude and submitting the spirit to its low constraints. Through fidelity to this spirit of retreat and contemplation souls have suffered almost as much as for the faith. Indeed it must be remembered that this spirit issues from faith as faith's most perfect fruit, and the blossoming of the desert is one of God's promises to the Church. 'Exaltabit solitudo et florebit quasi lilium'‡: The solitary place shall be glad and shall blossom as the lily.

\* De Hier. eccles. vi.

† Heb. xi. 38.

‡ Isaiah xxxv. 1.

Therefore solitude cannot be put into opposition to the common life, nor monastic institutions to the Church of which they are integrating parts. On the contrary, it will be seen that the cloister, the great and unique Cloister, the new Paradise in whose shade God walks,\* is the Church Herself. Strictly speaking, there are no little cloisters within the great cloister. The essential holiness of the Hierarchy flows out to, and at the same time reaches its full development in the holiness that is vowed in the religious life.

It is for this reason that in the periods when the Church was most solidly established among the peoples and its divine constitution unreservedly admitted, the sense of solitude developed with a supernatural intensity, received a full rational justification and took on a classic poetical form. We may here recall, without mentioning the great examples of contemplative life in the seventeenth century, the following simple and pleasant picture which evokes them all: 'In the solitude of Sainte-Pare, as remote from worldly ways as its blessed situation was separated from all mundane business; in this holy mountain that God had favoured for a thousand years, where the Brides of Jesus Christ made the

\* Gen. iii. 8.



beauty of long past ages live again, where earthly joys were unknown, where the footsteps of the fashionable, the curious and the wanderers were never heard; under the direction of the holy abbess who knew how to give milk to babes just as well as bread to the strong, the early days of the princess Anne were happy.\*

From what has already been said it will be clear that in the spiritual order it is not the solitude which envelops the City, but the City which envelops and penetrates the solitude, and that, in truth, solitude, properly so called, is impossible for the Christian. Thebaid or City, it is always the mystery of the Church; and when the Christian finds his soul in the one, it is only in order to lose it in the other, and he never gets out of this mystery. The delights of those who contemplate nature and of those who love solitude for natural reasons are nothing in comparison with the joys felt by the soul when it enters into the mystery of the Church and loses itself in its depths. It is then that it forgets and renounces itself, but in order to transform itself and to expand its new being to infinity. And in its transport it cries and sings: 'It is from the Church that I receive this astounding conscious-

\* Bossuet, *Oraison funèbre de la Palatine*.

ness of the richness with which I am filled. Henceforth it is, as it were, impossible for me to find within myself a personal ego. I feel that I belong to all the ages: I have a root in the Old Testament; I belong to the whole Church and all the world belongs to me. I believe all things and I await all things from God; the vision is lacking, but I hold all things in my beloved faith. . . . These realities will become more alive in me in proportion as I become nothing and my richness becomes an austere goad. I must go ahead, with my gaze fixed on heaven, not on earth. Not that I should have contempt or that I should deliberately forget, but that I should ignore. I must not stop either at the evil or the good that is within me, but out of all my defects I must make purity and light by throwing them into that flame which consumes all sin, by giving them to that adorable Vulture who once for all has swallowed death. . . . "Exi a me quia homo peccator sum Domine," this phrase will mean for me henceforth: Stand away, O Lord, in order that I may take a spring and seize you more profoundly. . . .' This cry of the soul is that ineffable groaning, mentioned by St. Paul. For it is in the heart of the Church that the Holy Ghost, the principle of cohesion and love

between Christ and His Bride, first utters it and brings it to the understanding of the soul: *Et Spiritus et Sponsa dicunt: Veni.\**

Thus the Communion of Saints does not stop at the threshold of the desert. There is no individual excellence amongst the members of Christ which is unconnected with the life of the whole body or which is unaffected by that total life. The Communion of Saints is the enrichment of all by all; but it can often be the enrichment of all or many by a single member. The Church envisaged as the Thebaid of souls offers a mysterious hierarchy of values and powers, subordinated doubtless to the visible hierarchy, but not necessarily corresponding to its degrees. This is the most striking miracle of the Communion of Saints. But it is always the same life and the same end, the life and the end of the Church, the City. '*In ecclesiastica hierarchia interdum qui sunt Deo per sanctitatem propinquiores, sunt gradu infimi et scientia non eminentes . . . et propter hoc superiores ab inferioribus doceri possunt*'†: In the ecclesiastical hierarchy it sometimes happens that those who

\* Apoc. xxii. 17. 'And the Spirit and the Bride say: Come, Lord Jesus.'

† *Sum. Theol.*, I. cvi. 3.

are closest to God through holiness are sometimes the lowest in rank and are not eminent in knowledge. . . . It is for this reason that superiors in this hierarchy can learn from inferiors. These humble members of Christ who form the hierarchy of the Thebaid sometimes succeed in reproducing in themselves a perfect image of Christ, into Whom they have continually attempted to transform themselves, and they seem to dispose of His redemptive and mediating power—but always at the service of the City.

St. Augustine would have considered it offensive to compare the heroes from whom the heathen made their gods with our Martyrs, or with even the weakest of the Church's members. 'Contra unam aniculam fidelem Christianam, quid valet Juno?': What is Juno worth in comparison with one old faithful Christian woman?

It is thus the Communion of Saints which makes the unity between the Thebaid and the City; not at all in the way of a purely spiritual and invisible bond, but by means of participation in the Sacraments, in the religion of the City and in the profession of faith which it teaches.

\* Sermon 273, Vol. ix., ed. Gaume.

The mystery of the Church, by prolonging itself into the depths of the Thebaid, does not on that account become disturbing and obscure. We must not say: 'Quis descendit in abyssum?' For these depths are entirely lucid. The exchange of invisible goods in the Communion of Saints does not take place without order, and the invisible hierarchy of souls is subject to laws; and this order and these laws have their source in the City.

Does not the mystery of the Church remain perceptible, even to the eyes? It is truly the City and the Bride, as shown to us in the Apocalypse,\* visible to all and shining like some phenomenon of the heavens. We see Her coming down from the regions of light, all complete, with Her foundations and Her walls, unlike those old towns who leave their primitive ramparts up on the mountains when they extend slowly downwards towards the plain. The Bridal City seems suspended in the air, like a model design for the builders, or as though summoning pilgrims from afar. But at the same time She takes on a massive appearance like a strong town; She has a forum of crystal and gold for the meetings and transactions of Her citizens, for their fes-

\* Apoc. xxi. 10 sq.

tivals and triumphs: 'Platea civitatis aurum mundum tanquam virtum perlucidum.'\* If Her religious life is not localized in any temple, 'templum non vidi in ea,' this is not because She affects an abstract worship, for it is the Lamb together with the Almighty God who is Her Temple.† The light which lightens Her is assuredly no brightness of this world, 'non eget sole neque luna'; nevertheless it is the Light made Man: 'Lucerna eius est Agnus.'‡

The Bridal City! What an idea and what an image! What a spiritual and material, divine and human revelation! It defies all the attempts at deification of the earthly and pagan city, and eclipses what men have called the miracles of civilization. Even the history of Catholic Venice, wedded by its Doge, does not approach it. And it equally defies all the false systems of purely interior and spiritual religion.

For what constitutes the excellence of this City is that it is both divine and human at the same time. Just as Christ introduced into the ranks of humanity the mixed type of the New Man, whose imitation is obligatory because He is God

\* Apoc. xxi. 21.

† *Ibid.*, 22.

‡ *Ibid.*, 23.

and possible because He is Man, so the Church, because Her constitution is divine and human, imposes Herself from an exalted position upon all earthly States and operates very efficaciously upon the same human material. She imposes Herself: Her supernatural end makes Her the highest possible type of society and the end of temporal societies is subordinated to Her own. She operates: She takes a real place among earthly societies; She is visibly organized, effectively acting; and by giving a supernatural direction to every social service, it may be said that She endows them with a twofold value, that She increases and completes their efficacy and their beneficence.\*

\* "To the politicians who declare a war to the death with the Church after having denounced Her as an enemy, to the sectaries who are never tired of vilifying and calumniating Her with a hellish hatred, to the false champions of science who set out to make Her odious through their sophisms, by accusing Her of being the enemy of liberty, civilization and intellectual progress, answer boldly that the Catholic Church, the mistress and queen of souls, dominates the world because She is the Bride of Jesus Christ.

"Having everything in common with Him, rich with His goods, depository of the Truth, She alone can claim veneration and love from the peoples.

"So that any one who revolts against the authority of the Church under the unjust pretext that She is invading the domain of the State, is imposing terms on truth; any one who declares Her to be an alien in a nation declares at the same time that truth must be an alien there; anyone who is afraid that She may weaken the liberty and greatness of a people is

This alloy, made by the divine hand, is so well balanced that the Church is saved from those extremes and confusions which the most illustrious builders of society have failed to avoid. From excess of idealism Plato fell into communism and was vigorously refuted by Aristotle.\* Aristotle, in his turn, when assigning an end to the State that shall not be merely utilitarian but moral, *i.e.*, one that shall produce the virtuous man, does not bring out sufficiently what meaning he attaches to the virtue he expects of the citizen.† Also, in order to complete the work of the laws, he calls in the help of Philosophy,‡ which cannot however be an organic function of the State.

The Church avoids this excess and supplies this lack. She maintains the Christian city in conformity with the laws of nature and with its temporal end. She further makes it dependent upon a moral law that is more perfect and precise

compelled to admit that a people can be great and free without truth.'—Discourse of Pius X on the Beatification of Joan of Arc, April, 1909.

\* Polit. ii.; cf. *Outlines of the Philos. of Aristotle*. E. Wallace, ch. viii.

† 'Of the two ideas, rectitude and efficiency, the latter made up the greater part of what a Greek meant by "virtue".' Rickaby, *Political and Moral Essays*, pp. 146, 59.

‡ Pol. ii.



than that of civic virtue because it is supernatural.

On the other hand, the balance between these two divine and human elements of which the Church is made is so harmonious that it enables them each to be justified by the other. Thus the origin and foundation of natural society is the family: similarly, the origin and foundation of the Church is the Fatherhood of God and that eternal Family of the Three Consubstantial Persons, 'of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.'\* And the Lord Jesus Himself willed to have a genealogy and a family.

Again, the essential function of authority in human society is to secure the reign of justice by means of laws; similarly the Christian city draws all its life from the Justice satisfied in God through the Redemption, re-established in man through grace; and the Church gives to authority and its laws their true sanction and support by making them proceed from the very Reason of God and culminate in His Judgement. If examined carefully, Justice will be seen to be the soul of Charity itself; and Charity fulfils the work of Justice, bringing to it repose and joy.

\* Eph. iii. 15.

It is thus Christian justice which makes law not something conventional, 'as Lycophron held it to be,'\* but a moral reality.

Finally, the noblest right of human authority is the control of the education of children—however subordinated this may be to the rights of the family and of the Church. But the primordial right and the primordial mission of the Bridal City is to teach.

For the rest, all the forms that human society may successively assume, or, more or less happily, include within itself, are to be found in a wonderful manner within the Church. In the Old Testament She is Patriarchal. She is an absolute Monarchy, a Hierarchy of divine right, an immense people of a holy and chosen race; and to the extent that She exalts Her Head by emphasizing Her unity, to the same extent through the apostolic succession of the Episcopate She stands out as an aristocracy, and through Her catholicity She canonizes the multitude.

This parallelism, or rather this compenetration of the divine and human element in the Church, leads us inevitably to the idea of Christendom. The Christian City penetrates so deeply into the life of earthly cities that the establishment of an

\* Aristotle, *Pol.* iii. 5, 11.

order between them is unavoidable. Collective beings, like individual beings, tend to form a unified whole; otherwise they fail to correspond to the intentions of God. For God's plans are general plans, plans for an inter-related whole; and, in fact, this is the necessary condition for any plan if it is to be of value. 'Subtrahere ordinem rebus creatis est eis subtrahere id quod optimum habent: nam singulis in seipsis sunt bona, simul autem omnia sunt optima propter ordinem universi. Semper enim totum est melius partibus, et finis ipsarum': To take away their order from created things is to deprive them of the best that they have; for each thing in itself is good, but all taken together are best, by reason of the order of the universe. For the whole is always better than the parts, and it is the end towards which they are ordained. Christendom is the necessary manifestation of this order. Peoples and States, just as much as individuals, form part of the Church.

This harmony of the two divine and human elements which takes place in the Church also explains Rome's predestination to be the seat of the Papal Primacy. Rome stands for the personification of the genius of the earthly City. In

\* *Contra Gentes*. iii. 69.

Rome the unity of the world was affirmed and that legislation which was to become the written reason of mankind, the Roman law, the mother of all legislation, was gradually organized. The apogee of Rome was thus to be the signal for the apparition of the Bridal City; the two Cities met together and effected an epitome of the divine Plan. The fusion did not occur without conflicts, the conflicts of the imperial persecutions—but on the part of the Church it was never an absorption, in spite of so many chances of substituting Herself for the Empire. The Bridal City could repeat the words of Her Master for the benefit of the Roman city, without much altering their meaning: ‘Non veni legem solvere; sed adimplere.’ Christ deigned to make Himself a citizen of Rome in order to fulfil civilization and law.\* From this union with the Church Rome took on a new spiritual symbolic being, embracing all time and extending even beyond. As Jerusalem was called

\* E sarai meco, senza fine, cive  
 Di quella Roma onde Christo e Romano . . .  
 (Purg. xxxii. 102.)  
 Thou wilt be with me, everlastingly, a citizen  
 Of that Rome whereof Christ is a Roman.

In this passage Dante is opposing the eternal Rome of Heaven to the earthly Rome. But he is wrong; Rome must no longer be divided. If Jerusalem is now only a symbol, Rome is living on earth as well as in heaven.

heavenly, so Rome came to be called eternal.

It is the glory of the Middle Ages to have chosen to conceive the Church in the form of a glorious City, to have so thoroughly penetrated and so deeply felt the reason for the diversity and the order of the functions of this great organism. 'Diversitas officiorum in Ecclesia pertinet ad perfectionem, ad actionem, ad decorem': The diversity of offices in the Church is ordained to the perfection, to the action, to the beauty of the Church; to have always based the perfecting of the individual and the person on the general life of the Church or on some institution made in Her image. For all that, however, the Middle Ages were not unaware of the joys of the Thebaid. They lived instinctively and uniquely on the faith in the Mystery of the Church. 'The relation of all things to the Church and of the Church to all things,' noted Bossuet.† This sums up the Middle Ages.

\* *Sum. Theol.*, II<sub>2</sub>, II<sub>ae</sub>, clxxxiii. 2 and 3.

† *Pensées*, Lebarq. vi.

## THE MISSION AND THE SPIRIT

SCRIBAM super eum nomen Dei mei, et nomen civitatis Dei mei novae Jerusalem\*: I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God which is new Jerusalem. The name of the Church as surely as the name of God and of Christ.

The Incarnation is a mission of the Son of God into the world and this mission is continued and diffused throughout the multiplicity of ecclesiastical ministries in all time. 'As the Father has sent me.'† As in the Old Testament the Prophets and the Angels themselves never intervened without being sent, so in the New there is no ministry of the Redemption not only without a call or a vocation which renders it apt, but without a formal mission which applies it to the work to be done. And God is no less jealous in the New Testament of His exclusive right of sending.‡

\* Apoc. iii. 12.

† John xx. 21.

‡ Cf. Jer. xxiij. 21.

But this mission of hierarchic ministers, as surely as the call itself,\* only comes from God by passing through the Church. She is a vast and perpetual mission.

The distinction between the power of order and the power of jurisdiction† is founded on this permanent necessity of the mission whose meaning has been made admirably clear to the Church by the Scriptures and the Holy Ghost. Without the mission, at least in the elementary form of a permission, the sacerdotal power, although remaining valid, would no longer honour God, would no longer offer a sweet-smelling sacrifice. In the same way, without jurisdiction, the power of remitting or retaining sins becomes inefficacious, since it is jurisdic-

\* Cf. the very interesting answer of the Commission of Cardinals specially set up in June, 1912, in order to examine the doctrine of vocations to the priesthood. It found that the formal element of a vocation to the priesthood consists uniquely in the call of the Church, through the Bishop (Letter of the Secretariat of State to the Bishop of Aire, 1st July, 1912).

[Editor's note: See on this question the work of M. Alphonse Mulders, Doctor of Theology, *La Vocation au Sacerdoce*. Bruges, 1925.]

† *Ibid.* [According to theologians the power of order in the Church is the sacramental power; it is indelible and its object is the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice and everything that relates to the administration of the Sacraments and the sanctification of souls. The power of jurisdiction is the power of government, the power of directing the faithful by the teaching of doctrine and by laws.—Editor's note.]

tion that determines its matter, its field of action.

But there are also extra-hierarchical missions in the Church. St. Francis of Assisi, who was never a priest, is recognized as a master of evangelical perfection. Women are invested with reforming missions. Even diplomatic and military missions when they have the interests of Christendom as their object and when they are conferred by the mandate of the Holy See, become strictly supernatural missions. Don John of Austria, charged with saving Europe at Lepanto, gained for his epitaph the magnificent appropriation: 'Fuit homo missus a Deo cui nomen erat Joannes.'

Are we not bound also to extend the doctrine of the mission to the most ordinary states of life, since the sacramental economy assures to all these states, to which marriage is the gate, a special grace, a grace of *state* or status at the same time as it makes precise and completes the notion of their duties? We may truly see in this a species of mission. And besides, do not all the sacraments help us to link all the circumstances of our life to the unique rule of the divine Will, do they not whisper to us God's word of command for each of our years or each of our days? All supernatural morality and conse-



quently spirituality itself, is based on the sanctification of the duties of our state in life. It is here that the superior wisdom and the universal beneficence of the Church shines out. But once again, it is a question of an extension of the doctrine of the mission to all the daily circumstances of the ordinary states of the Christian life. By this supernatural conformity to the providential order we unite ourselves with the great act of obedience made by the Son of God when He came into this world, the initial act which comprehended that of Calvary.

Why then should we, for preference, exalt and regard as martyrs those who, for the progress of science or of human inventions, for example, lose their life in extraordinary exploits? Is not the humble Christian who dies while working silently at home, in the authentic line of duty? Is his goal less admirable? Has he not sacrificed himself for a true mission? 'Quotidie morior.'

Many desire a mission, as though they had not got one. In reality it is the human stimulus of an exceptional choice which is their ambition. They must be able to feel themselves out of the ordinary in order to have a taste for action: they do not lack the mission but the spirit.

Others have the spirit for higher and more difficult missions, but they are fearful and hide themselves. But do not these still remain as invisible instruments in the Church?

These remarks lead us to complete the principle of the necessity of the mission by the principle of the necessity of the spirit. The mission in the Church, whether it be hierarchic or extra-hierarchic, must never proceed without the spirit of the Church. The mission possesses its whole power, its real influence, its fecundity, only through the spirit. That seems palpably obvious.

Now one of the primary effects of the spirit is to give us a living faith in the mission, to make us find in the mandate of God and of His Church the principal strength for action, to eliminate any excess of personal and natural activity, the seeking of one's own glory and personal agitation; to inspire pride in the righteousness of the cause and in the principles one represents: to sustain devotion even to sacrifice.

The spirit assists the mission; it does not dispense with it. There is no mysticism outside the Church.

The spirit is sometimes antecedent to the mission. It does not usurp it, or rashly presume

on it; but it prepares and merits it. Thus in the case of almost all the religious orders, the founders and their earliest disciples first lived the idea of the institution before formulating it to themselves or submitting it to the Church. This inspired fervour wins the sanction of the Church who brings out the definite meaning of the idea and officially gives the mission.

Unfortunately this sanction often only arrives at the moment when the golden age is ending. And it is then threatened with a twofold danger; either of reclining on the mission or of systemizing it to the extreme; in the first case this means that the spirit goes to sleep and in the second that it is stifled.

This twofold danger which comes after the mission has been legitimately conferred, is quite as real for individuals as for institutions, for Masters in Theology, for example, and for preachers.

In times of heresy and schism it is the very necessity of the mission which is repudiated.

In times of political servitude or of liberalism it is the fullness of the spirit which is lacking.

This lack in the integrity of the spirit in

periods of liberalism is explicable from the psychological standpoint by two obvious traits: liberals are receptive and feverish persons; receptive, because they too easily take on the state of mind of their contemporaries; feverish, because from fear of wounding these various states of mind, they are troubled by a continual apologetic restlessness. They seem to suffer themselves from the doubts which they are combating; they lack sufficient confidence in the Truth. They are too eager to justify, to demonstrate, to adapt, or even to excuse.

This nervousness and fever are not a sufficiently pure homage to the Truth and they indicate a too imperfect commerce with it. They diminish faith in the mission received and weaken its grace. This is the reason for the defeat of Christian revivals undertaken in the name of liberalism. The Church may have blessed their beginnings, but the spirit has ended by betraying the mission.

To-day we have documentary evidence of the lamentable defects of the spirit in Lammenais with regard to the promising mission which failed to become his own. All his complaints in *Les Affaires de Rome* about the precipitate action of the Holy See, and its refusal to attend to

him, have been proved to be false.\* According to a letter to Ventura in May, 1833, his own apostasy seems to have been consummated in his heart at that date, that is, well before the *Paroles d'un Croquant*. 'In order to exalt the Papacy, Lammenais employed an imperious manner and a tone of command. . . . It had to be great because he wanted it to be great and in the way he wanted it to be. It was to the Papacy of his dreams that his loving declarations of being an obedient son were addressed. His obedience thus understood was like a detail of his dream: like those medieval sculptors who represented themselves as prostrate beneath the pulpit they had made, he prostrated himself beneath the Chair of Peter, but it was beneath a Chair that, as a prophet, his own controlling hands had raised . . . a Chair based upon new supports.'†

Sometimes, on the contrary, everything seems to call for the mission from the Church and the

\* 'From the year 1829,' notes M. Goyau, 'the future Gregory XVI, Cardinal Capellari, had had to busy himself with Lammenais in a long correspondence with Cardinal Lanbauschini, the Nuncio at Paris. When, two years later, the chancelleries became alarmed at the doctrines of Lammenais, the Pope had nothing to learn from them. His theological opinion was formed and his conscience owed nothing to politics.'

† Georges Goyau.

mission does not come. This can doubtless be sufficiently explained by the superior sense of opportunities which belongs to the Church. Newman formed in vain certain great projects for the strengthening of Catholicism in England: some progress was made towards their realization after his death. But this actual example suggests another explanation. When the dreamer of a great religious work is a man of great sensibility, he caresses this work as the fruit of his personal act; as a true artist he endows it with subtle exigencies and fertile impulses. But the works of God are fruits of reason and wisdom and, further, they must be such that they cannot be attributable to caprice, nor even to the genius of a human artist. Thus God gives the artist the honour of foreshadowing and announcing the work, but He reserves its accomplishment to His Church and often by more humble instruments. This trial, this law of purification of what is human and individual is imposed upon ideas as well as upon works. If God did not will that St. Thomas Aquinas should complete his *Summa*, this was not because the humility of the great doctor was in peril, but because such matters are only elucidated and only completed in Eternity.

I would not indeed say that Pascal, like Lammenais, misunderstood the mystery of the Church, nor that, in spite of his relations with heresy, he rejected the necessity of the mission and the spirit. In order to avoid all injustice with regard to him, we must give him the credit which certain striking thoughts on the Church deserve. 'The history of the Church ought strictly to be called the history of Truth.—It is impossible that those who love God with all their hearts should fail to see the Church; She is so evident.—The example of the death of the martyrs affects us, for they are our members.—I am present to you by my word in the Scriptures, by my spirit in the Church.' Nevertheless, he did not sufficiently base his apologetic structure on the mystery of the Church; and Jansenist influence narrowed his vision of this mystery.

His method of demonstration is self-reflexive, dramatic, preoccupied with the individual and the subject. Even when he allows his soul to go forth into the mystery of Jesus, he is tense and poignant rather than tender. We look in vain for that kind of Christian cheerfulness which is the exquisite form of purity and integrity, but which can only develop in the

peaceful atmosphere of the mystery of the Church. It might be said that he could not sufficiently forget the libertines and that his anxiety to defend himself against them sometimes smacks rather of fever than of ancient doctrine. Above all he did not forget his Jansenism; whilst Bossuet, on the other hand, was always forgetting his Gallicanism in order to exalt the mystery of the Church.

‘God has done a work in the midst of us, which, detached from every other cause and proceeding from Him alone, fills all time and every place and bears throughout the whole earth the impression of his hand and the character of his authority. This work is Jesus Christ and His Church. He has endowed this Church with an authority that is alone capable of abasing pride and exalting simplicity. . . .’\*

It has been said that one must suffer not only for the Church but by the Church. If there is any truth in this, it is because we sometimes need to be treated strongly, to be kept in the shade, in silence and in apparent disgrace, perhaps from not having sufficiently profited, in a holy way, from the favours and advances of the Church at other times.

\* Oraison funèbre d'Anne de Gonzague de Clèves.



In that case there is no doubt that this strong treatment, which makes us efficaciously assist in the order and holiness of the Church, will be for us the supernatural equivalent of a mission. In any case, the certain sign that we are preserving the fullness of the spirit is never to admit that we can suffer by the Church in any other way than we can suffer by God.

# THE MATERNITY AND SUZERAINTY OF THE CHURCH

No maternity is comparable to that of the Church for nobility, fecundity, tenderness and strength.

For nobility: issuing from the Heart of God and from the Heart of Christ, immune from the blight of evil and of age,\* She does not engender for servitude, She bears the honour of God Himself. With what pride St. Paul speaks of this maternity: 'Illa autem, quae sursum est Jerusalem, libera est, quae est mater nostra!': But that Jerusalem which is on high is free, which is the mother of us all.†

For fecundity: because Her love is in proportion to that love which binds Her to Christ, it is limitless and always in act. All men have to be reborn through Her: 'Nisi quis renatus fuerit. . . .'‡: Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the

\* Eph. v. 27.

† Gal. iv. 24-26.

‡ John iii. 5.

kingdom of God. But by coming to the true life they do not therefore leave Her bosom. 'To engender, for the Church, means to receive Her children into Her womb; their death is to go out from Her.\* At the very moment when we leave this world, on that birthday, the Church is more than ever our Mother: we belong to Her perfectly in Heaven. The maternity of the Church is as immense as the paternity of God.

For tenderness: it is the tenderness of the Bride who gives herself to her children; in them She loves Christ. But no one loves Christ like the Church, just as Christ loves nothing so much as the Church. That is why nothing is more pure, more disinterested than this tenderness. 'One never loves a person,' says Pascal, 'but only qualities.' But the Church loves our persons and our souls directly, without abstraction and quite simply.

Again, that is why no mother knows how to pray for her children as does the Church. She knows the value of the good that She desires for them; She desires it for them as the Heart of Christ desires it. The Church also has been 'given the formula of the Lord's prayer: 'Oratio

\* Bossuet, *Pensées Chrét et Morales*, Lebarq. t. vi.

dominica profertur expersona communi totius Ecclesiae': The Lord's prayer is offered by the common person of the whole Church.\* And together with this, She possesses more than the genius of prayer; She enjoys the full possession of that Spirit which is living and divine Prayer, the unique Prayer uttered in the bosom of God.

Further, no mother weeps as the Church weeps. She suffers the eternal loss of Her children with an entirely supernatural intensity of grief—the closest symbol of what sorrow would be in God, if He could grieve. She suffers with them in their trials by incomparably maternal cries in Her Litanies and Intercessions. She weeps over their temporal deaths in the tears of the Liturgy of the dead. She alone is truly faithful to the Dead and assists them in their awful Purgatory. And with what tender veneration She has always surrounded the mortal remains of her children!

The prayers and tears that spring from our hearts and eyes may well reveal depths of tenderness and sadness, but only when our desires and sorrows have passed through the heart and voice of the Church do we feel ourselves worthy

\* *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, lxxxlii. 16 ad. 3.

of our sorrow and free from our debt to those we love.

For strength. The strength of the Church comes from that jealous value for souls which She holds from God. In Her eyes souls are worth more than all worlds. '*Quam commutationem dabit homo pro anima sua*'\*: What shall a man give in exchange for his own soul? They are worth, each and every one, all the blood of Her divine Bridegroom. It is for the sake of the souls of Her children that She is so constant in affirming the absolute character of the law of God, in denouncing scandals, in demanding justice. Sometimes She may be reduced to powerlessness or even silence when confronted with material injustice and bodily oppression, but She can never fail to make Her claim for the right of souls. For the sake of souls She knows how to endure for any length of time and to yield magnanimously. For their sakes She shows, in Her warnings and prohibitions, a vigilance that is so foreseeing or even so alarmed, that She seems to assume not only the strength but also the weakness and fear of a mother. She is a 'mother of innumerable fears for those She loves.' At the same time

\* *Matth. xvi. 26.*

She encourages the heroism of zeal and She retains a male severity in Her love. She appeals only to what is purest in obedience. 'Anima vestras castificantes in obedientia charitatis' (Gk. veritatis)\*: purifying your souls in obeying charity; in the Greek text: in obeying the truth.

Between the Paternity of God and the Maternity of the Church there is an intermediary type; that of our Lady.† The wonder of the Maternity of Mary is reflected in the Church, who, by the unique grace of the Holy Ghost, engenders God in humanity and humanity in God. The universality of the maternal mediation of Mary is also realized and completed through the Church.

The Maternity of the Church adds charm and happiness to all the joys of the Faith. It is indeed of filial love for the Church that it may be said: 'Caritas omnia credit'‡: Charity believes all things. The Rule of Faith becomes living and familiar, a loved and harmonious voice;

\* 1 Peter i. 22.

† [If the author had been able to complete his work he would have insisted on this relation between the Maternity of the Church and the Maternity of Mary. He would have shown in Mary and in the Church the same divine thought under two different forms.—Editor's note.]

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

that maternal authority acts in us as a principle of absolute intellectual docility. Even when the charm of the Maternity of the Church is only dimly experienced it is sufficient to make it impossible to treat the idea of Catholicity any more as a thing to be played with, or to desire to limit the domain of catholic Certitude, because that would be to limit the Maternity of the Church. The moment there is a tendency to admit that the Church is the Mother of our faith, it has to be admitted as well that not only the union of hearts, but also, and primarily, the union of intelligences must contribute to Catholicity and that the charity of good will cannot make up for ruptures in the Unity of the Faith.

The Maternity of the Church makes the Christian proudly intransigent and instinctively reserved. He cannot allow his loyalty or the fervour of his obedience to weaken without, by that very fact, contesting the maternal right of the Church. It would be as though the gravest suspicion had suddenly arisen against the legitimacy of his birth and the honour of his parents.

The measure of a mother's devotion may well be the value of the nourishment she gives to her children and the care with which she prepares

it. Consider the Bread that the Church gives us and how she prepares it for us! 'Venite comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis'\*: Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mixed for you.

It is in the Maternity of the Church that we must look for the root of: (1) Her coercive power. For it belongs to the Mother and is incumbent upon Her to correct and chastise; and it is only over Her children that the Church claims to exercise this right; (2) that indirect, but real, power of temporal suzerainty which allows Her to intervene in the life of States. 'Quidquid igitur est in rebus humanis quomodo sacrum, quidquid ad salutem animorum cultumve Dei pertinet, sive tale illud sit natura sua, sive rursus tale intelligatur propter causam ad quam refertur, id est omne in potestate arbitrioque Ecclesiae'†: Thus whatever is in any way sacred in human things, whatever concerns the salvation of souls or the worship of God—whether it be so by its nature, or judged to be so by reason of the object to which it refers—all this belongs to the power and arbitration of the Church.—Leo XIII.

\* Prov. ix. 5.

† Encyclical, *Immortale Dei*, 1st November, 1885



The salvation of souls is the specific maternal charge of the Church; the worship of God is Her function as the Bride of Christ. In brief it is the Maternity of the Church which is the foundation of Her right of temporal suzerainty.

The Emperor is in the Church and not above Her, said St. Ambrose: he is a son of the Church. And to remind him of this is not to insult him, but to honour him. '*Quid honorificentius quam ut Imperator Ecclesiae filius esse dicatur? Quod cum dicitur sine peccato dicitur, cum gratia dicitur. Imperator enim intra Ecclesiam, non supra Ecclesiam est; bonus enim Imperator quaerit auxilium Ecclesiae, non refutat*\*: What more honourable for the Emperor than to be called the son of the Church? By giving him this name, not an offence but glory is offered to him. For the Emperor is in the Church, not above the Church; if the Emperor is good he will not refuse the assistance of the Church; he will seek it.

The relation between this right of suzerainty and of intervention, and the Maternity of the Church must never be forgotten if we are to understand both the precision with which its

\* Serm., contra Auxent.

object is defined and the latitude it allows in practice.

Undoubtedly it is fitting that this right should be defined exactly. That which specifies it is the spiritual element, so easily intermingled in human affairs, and which belongs necessarily to the Church. But in practice it is often difficult to circumscribe the spiritual element, and it is the Church who must judge of it, not only according to the rules of Her jurisprudence, but especially—and this should be well noted—according to what Her maternal responsibility demands; and this is of indefinite extent. Further, the ‘*ratio peccati*’\*, which allows the Church even to free the subjects of a prince from their oath of fidelity, opens a very large sphere to the right of the Church, for Her right to preserve Her children from scandal is unlimited. The application of such a judgement cannot be limited to the one sin of scandal against the faith; the Church can bring it against many other scandals also. ‘*Aliquis per infidelitatem peccans potest sententialiter jus dominii amittere, sicut*

\* [It is by reason of the sin into which souls may be induced by some arrangement, that is in itself purely temporal, taken by the civil authority, that the Church has an indirect power over temporal affairs.—Editor’s note.]

etiam quandoque propter alias culpas'\*: A man may lose his right of dominion by a judicial sentence for a crime against the faith (apostacy or heresy), as also for other faults.

Even with regard to infidel Princes or Lords, whose domain is, of course, not abrogated *ipso facto* by the Church, we must still admit Her power to pronounce their deposition always on account of Her Maternity which makes Her children the sons of God. 'Quia infideles merito infidelitatis suae merentur potestatem amittere super fideles, qui transferuntur in filios Dei'†: Because infidels, by reason of their infidelity, merit the loss of their authority over those who through faith are transferred into the condition of the children of God. But She never exercises this power except when the temporal authority is in Her hands or in the hands of a Christian sovereign.

\* *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, xii. 2. [Evidently, if it is a question of the domain of the Sovereign over his subjects, this domain cannot be lost for any fault, but only for one that places the souls of his subjects in grave peril. *De facto*, St. Thomas only envisages the case of the crime against faith, 'apostacy (or heresy) totally separating man from God, which does not take place in other sins' (ad. 3), and 'the apostate meditating evil in the depravation of his heart and doing his best to divorce other men from the faith.' But may not other crimes place the souls of his subjects in as grave a peril?—Editor's note.]

† *Ibid.*, IIa, IIae, x. 10.

Nor is this merely a medieval Right or Law, a transitory and conventional thing. For the maternal right of the Church is to be found in the Gospel. There its formal object is strictly defined: '*reddite quae sunt Dei Deo*,' but its application and exercise is almost unlimited. The didrachma demanded from Peter was as much a national as a religious tax: the Lord, on the grounds that He was the Son of God, declared Himself exempt from it and with Him, in principle, all the children of the Church. '*Ergo liberi sunt filii*'\*: The children are thus exempt. This was a national tax, we said, and therefore our Lord's thought will be the same with regard to the taxes due to Caesar. If it is too much to see in this a kind of corrective to the '*Reddite quae sunt Caesaris Caesari*,' there is nothing excessive in seeing in it a sign of the Church's right to be the sole judge of the extent or the limitation of Her right.

It is because the Maternity of the Church demands this, so to say, indefinite extent in the applications of Her sovereign right, that some theologians in the course of history have pushed their enthusiastic convictions as to this right,

\* Matt. xvii. 25. St. Thomas, IIa, IIae, x. 10, interprets this passage in the same way.

even to claiming for Her directly all earthly power. The 'ne scandalizemus eos' by which our Saviour motivated His pure and gracious concession when He paid the didrachma seemed to them the only possible limitation to the rights of the Mother of the redeemed. And why should they be so rebuked for this?\*

Further, it is this extent of these possible applications of Her Right that alone justifies the Church Herself in having sometimes given to the object or the exercise of Her suzerainty so comprehensive a notion that at first sight it would seem obscure. An example of this is the conclusion of the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII: 'Subesse Romano Pontifici omnem humanam creaturam declaramus, diffinimus, dicimus et pronuntiamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis': It is necessary for salvation that every human creature should be subject to the Roman Pontiff.† Its exact interpretation is easy; but it must be a filial interpretation.

Finally, the same reason explains how, at certain critical moments in the West, the Church

\* If carefully read, will not the letters of Gregory VII be found to contain the theory of direct power?

† It is this universal authority that Leo XIII put into practice when he consecrated the whole *human race* to the Sacred Heart.

was able to take in hand with so much ease the affairs and succession of the Empire. This She did until the difficult period of transition was completed and She could pass on Her charge to the barbarian Kings whom She had baptized, and restore the ancient Empire in the form of the Holy Roman Empire.

That the Church has been guided in the exercise of Her suzerainty by maternal considerations is shown by the many concessions and Concordats made to Princes from which She was not the one to gain the greatest benefit and which rarely admitted, even in principle, the plenitude of Her divine right. The temporal powers, indeed, showed themselves less hesitant to cross the frontier of the spiritual and the jurists less discreet in their claims, than was the Church in intervening in the domain where the spiritual and temporal are mingled. To establish the truth of this comparison reference need not be made to facts. It is sufficient to set out the ideas which the World and the Church respectively maintain about their rights. We need not dwell on the very real pretensions of Alexander and of Cæsar to divine honours, nor on those of Octavius who, as Vegetius witnesses, seriously meant to assume a sacred

title when he took the name of Augustus in A.D. 27. Both Princes and peoples, in paganism, turned easily to this form of idolatry. But the Christian Emperors themselves, and the first among them, Constantine, did not at first repudiate certain marks of divine honour, such as temples built and games given in their honour. The Iconoclasts at Byzantium destroyed the images of Christ and the Saints, but they respected those of the Emperor. The title of Pontifex Maximus was only abandoned by the Emperor Gratian in the fourth century. Without running through the whole course of history we may note simply that it is secular civilization with its instinct of usurpation, in all times and countries, that the Apocalypse means to symbolize in the blaspheming Beast of the Sea and in that of the earth which 'doeth great wonders.' Both of them obtain the adoration which is refused to the Lamb.\*

The Church maintains the idea of Her Right with much greater precision and purity. It is an absolutely divine right, but it permits no excess in the homage it demands for those who are its instruments. The special honours rendered to the Popes that were borrowed from the

\* Apoc. xiii.

imperial honours are few and of late date. Never the epithet *divine*. Until about the eighth century it was the imperial palace that was called sacred in Rome; and it was at this same time that two Byzantine Emperors introduced the custom of kissing the feet of the Vicar of Christ and, it is said, imposed it on him.\*

When, later on, we see the Church, through the saintly vigour of Gregory VII or the universal activity of an Innocent III, break the resistance of the earthly Power, or holding Europe together in unity, we cannot accuse them of any personal desire to be idolized or of any ambition to dominate. Later still, when the drive of natural vitality flowing back towards paganism obscured and confused in men's minds all the notions of divine and human rights, when the intrusion or the pressure of the spirit of the age, produced even in the Church personal abuses of power, extravagant display and the mania of classicism, it is not the Church who must be held responsible for the ideal of the 'Prince' with which the Renaissance was infatuated. A totally different ideal of Her Right remained unalterably in the soul of the Church in the very midst of this

\* Cf. *Ancient King-Worship*, Lattey, C.T.S.



confusion. And when a Pope of this period, without hesitation, decided the attribution of newly discovered lands in favour of a European Monarchy, this action was in reality only the exercise of a right of arbitration with regard to a vacant property, determined in its form by the conditions of the time, but resulting from the maternal suzerainty of the Church. It was only one of the indefinitely varied forms of that suzerainty, just as are the political directives and counsels given in our days by the Church.

Thus all the instincts of the Christian mind and the Catholic soul tend, not indeed to confuse the two divine and human Powers, but to avoid introducing a distinction between the Maternity of the Church and Her suzerainty. The Christian mind makes the one the measure and the foundation of the other; it only arrests the Church's right of intervention at the limits traced by Herself; it recognizes in Her an arbitrator and counsellor who is not only beneficent but necessary and, in practice, sovereign and unlimited.

For the Christian attaches the public and suzerain right of the Church to the four inviolable prerogatives that bear witness to Her divine origin and constitution. It is Unity that

draws all peoples and States to Her and that makes them Her own. It is Holiness that makes Her inaccessible to the errors as well as to the hostile efforts of human legislation. Catholicity exempts Her from all nationalist servitude. Apostolicity is the seal of Her priesthood and the rampart of Her jurisdiction.\* These divine guarantees have something which, if not strictly infinite, is at least unlimited in its application.

The Christian goes so far as to desire for the Church, not indeed vain luxury, but magnificence—the most beautiful offerings of art, the homage of the sciences, in a word, the complete development of the whole of Her life as the City of the King of Kings.

But since this superhuman strength of the Church's Right is demanded by Her maternal mission, it ultimately only operates for the sake of love. 'In the Church,' says St. Francis of Sales,† 'everything is done to create love, in love, for the sake of love and by love.' And in his thought, this takes away nothing from Her strength. The Church is strong, but the Church

\* Cf. *Our Triduum Monastique de la Bienheureuse Jeanne d'Arc*, II: Jeanne d'Arc et la Politique Divin.

† Preface to the *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu*, edition of 1617. Pierre Rigaud, Lyons.

deserves the total return of our love. She has a right to our love in its simplest form, since we are, and remain, Her little children here on earth. She takes us up and carries us unwearingly in our wretchedness and our moral and physical nudity, as only a mother can do. She removes our swaddling clothes at baptism in order to imprint Her unction upon us; She lifts our winding sheet at death in order to anoint us again. It is the dependence of the whole of our being, interior and visible, private and public, without reserve and without shame.

She has a right to our most heroic love, or at least to a love that is so habitually generous that it endows us, even in common occurrences, with that cheerful goodwill that is next door to heroism. For although so strong, the Church loses none of those weaknesses that are beloved by God. 'The Church gathers together all those claims from which the assistance of Justice may be hoped. Justice owes a particular assistance to the weak, to orphans, to abandoned wives, to strangers.\* The Church is all that. She must have the chivalrous devotion of all Her children.

Our love for the Church is the sign that we

\* Bossuet, *Oraison funèbre de M. le Tellier*.

are preserving within us the divine gift of Charity, the living and personal pledge of the Infinite Love for us, who is the Holy Ghost. Loving the Church, we are loving Unity; and our love, multiplying itself by all the love that is in the Church, grows to infinity, loses itself in the Unity of Love and prepares its consummation. 'Accipimus ergo et nos Spiritum Sanctum, si amamus Ecclesiam, si charitate compaginamur, si catholico nomine et fide gaudemus. Credamus, fratres: quantum quisque amat Ecclesiam Christi, tantum habet Spiritum Sanctum. . . . Si amas unitatem, etiam tibi habet quisquis in illa habet aliquid': We therefore, we receive the Holy Ghost if we love the Church, if we are joined together by charity, if we make the Catholic name and faith our joy. Believe it, brethren: to the extent that a man loves the Church, to that extent he has the Holy Ghost within him. If you love unity, whoever possesses some good or some grace in unity, it is for you also that he possesses them.

\* St. Augustine, *In Joann.* Tract. xxxii. 8.

# THE FEASTS OF THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

*(This chapter was not written out. We have only found the following indications in the Manuscript.)*

## I. ALL SAINTS

ALL Saints corresponds to the Epiphany.

'Nec sane unctus est Christus Spiritu Sancto, quando super eum baptizatum velut columba descendit: tunc enim Corpus suum, id est Ecclesiam suam, praefigurare dignatus est, in qua praecipue baptizati accipiunt Spiritum Sanctum' (St. Augustine, *De Trin.*, lib. xv., c. 26, 46): Christ received the anointing of the Holy Ghost from the moment of His conception and not on the day of His baptism when the Holy Ghost came down upon Him in the form of a dove. For on that day it was His Body, *i.e.*, His Church, that He deigned to prefigure; His Church, in which the faithful

receive the Holy Ghost for the first time at baptism.

THE EPIPHANY: The Baptism (*Adoption*).

The Marriage of Cana (*divine espousals*).

The Magi (*Universality*).

ALL SAINTS: The Angels.

The Saints of the Old Testament.

Christendom realized at last.

\* \* \* \*

Lectio IV (from the Matins of the feast of All Saints in the Dominican Breviary).—‘This solemnity is not only dedicated to the Angels but to all the Saints who have appeared since the beginning of the world. The first were the Patriarchs, the fathers of the Prophets and the Apostles. They were found worthy of God, eminent in faith, wise in their works, restorers of the race, notable by their justice, of an indefectible hope, submissive to the Precepts, confident in the Promises, the guests of the Angels.

After them, the chosen Prophets, who spoke with God and shared His secrets. Some of

whom were sanctified in their mother's womb, others in their childhood or their youth or their old age. They were filled with faith, incomparable in devotion, fertile in resources (*industria solertes*), masters by their minds, possessing from experience all the secrets of the discipline of the soul, assiduous in meditating on holy things, intrepid in the face of death, scourging tyranny, weeping over the sins of the people, glorious by the gift of wonders' (*Ex Sermone Rabani vel Maximi Tarentini*).

Concerning our union with the Saints of the Old Testament.—Canon of the Mass.—‘*Omnes in nube baptizati sunt; bibebant de spiritali. . .*’ (1 Cor. x. 2-4): They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. ‘*In labores eorum introistis*’ (John iv. 3): Other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours.

‘*Abraham exultavit*’: Abraham rejoiced and was glad to see my day (John viii. 56). ‘*Idem est motus in imaginem in quantum est imago et in rem . . . et ideo antiqui Patres, servando legalia sacramenta, ferebantur in Christum per*

fidem et dilectionem eandem, qua et nos in ipsum ferimur' (St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, III, 8, 3, ad. 3): It is the same movement that bears us towards the image as such and towards the thing of which it is the image. . . . It is thus that the Fathers of old, by keeping the figurative precepts of the Law, were borne towards Christ by the same faith and the same love that bears us towards Him under the New Law.

'Qui ex fide sunt filii Abraham' (Gal. iii. 7): They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.—'Ut in gentibus benedictio Abrahae fieret in Christo Jesu' (Gal. iii.): That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

'Christianismus non in judaismum credidit, sed judaismus in christianismum' (St. Ignatius of Ant., ad. Magn., x. 3): For Christianity did not base its faith on Judaism, but Judaism on Christianity.

\* \* \* \*

Penetration of the idea of the Church in the Trinitarian doxology of the end of the primitive Canon—attested by the formula of the anaphora (or canon) of the Palimpsests of Verona published by Hauler and by the Ethio-



pian Statutes, two documents which Dom Cagin seems to have proved to contain the apostolic theme of the anaphora.\* 'Per quem tibi gloria et honor, Patri et Filio cum Sancto Spiritu, in sancta Ecclesia tua et nunc et in saecula saeculorum. Amen' (Verona): Through whom be honour and glory to Thee, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, in thy holy Church, now and for ever and ever. 'In quo tibi laus et potentia in sancta Ecclesia' (Eth. Stat.): In whom be to Thee praise and power in thy holy Church.

St. Paul had written (Eph. iii. 21): 'Ipsi gloria in Ecclesia et in Christo Jesu, in omnes generationes saeculi saeculorum. Amen': Unto him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Cf. Dom Cagin, *L'Eucharistia, Canon primitif de la Messe*, Desclee, 1912.)

The two Eucharistic prayers of the Didache (IX, X) make mention of the Church between the thanksgiving and the doxology.

The first, *de Pane fracto*: 'Gratias tibi agimus, Pater noster, pro vita et scientia quam indicasti nobis per Jesum puerum tuum; gloria tibi in saecula. Sicut hic panis fractus dispersus erat

\* See Appendix at end of chapter.

supra montes et collectus factus est unus, ita colligatur Ecclesia tua a finibus terrae in regnum tuum, quoniam tua est gloria et virtus per Jesum Christum in saecula': We give thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy child. To thee be glory for ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom, for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.

## II. THE DEDICATION OF CHURCHES

The Dedication corresponds to Pentecost.

'Et Angelis coronata

Ut Sponsata comite.\*

Crowned by Angels because crowned by God.

Our Lord is called an Angel (*Magni Consilii Angelus*—Isaiah ix.—the version adopted in the Introit for the third Mass of Christmas Day).

\* Blessed City Jerusalem  
 Called the vision of peace,  
 That is built in Heaven  
 Out of living stones,  
 And encircled with Angels  
 Like the cortège of the Bride.  
 (Vesper Hymn for the Dedication of Churches.)

The Pontiffs also (Malachi ii. 7; Apoc. ii, iii.).

The Angels serve our Lord.—Their legions are at his orders.—He is their Head (St. Paul, Col. ii. 10; Eph. i. 21).

The Law and the Angels.—‘The Law was promulgated by Angels in the hands of a mediator’ (Gal. iii. 19). ‘You who have received the Law by the disposition of Angels and have not kept it’ (Acts vii. 53). Cf. Deut. xxiii. 2 (Septuagint).

The Angelic Hymn.—The Angelic Salutation.

‘Spectaculum facti sumus mundo, et angelis’: We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels (St. Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 9).

‘Separabunt malos de medio justorum’: The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just (St. Matt. xiii. 49).

‘Gaudium in coelo pro uno peccatore’: Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance (St. Luke xv. 7).

‘Corpus Ecclesiae mysticum non solum consistit ex hominibus, sed etiam ex angelis: totius autem hujus multitudinis Christus est caput’

(St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, IIIa, 8, 4): The mystical Body of the Church is not only constituted by men, but also by Angels and it is Christ who is the Head of all this multitude.

Their heritage (that of the Angels) is in Heaven, the sweet country of light (Denis *Celest. Hier.*, xv.).

Compare the wonderful fifteenth chapter of the *Celestial Hierarchy*. 'Amongst all the angelic symbols, theology chooses with a kind of predilection, the symbol of fire. It pictures for us burning wheels, animals all of flame, men who resemble burning lights; it shows us the heavenly essences surrounded with consuming fires and rivers that roll waves of fire with noise and rapidity. In its language the thrones are of fire and the august seraphims are burning, according to the meaning of their name, and they send out heat and devour like fire. In a word, from the highest to the lowest degree of being the glorious symbol of fire always returns.' There follows the splendid description of the effects of fire as an image of the divine nature.

Denis often comes back to this twofold movement which carries the angelic essences, first towards God and then towards the beings

that are below them in order to communicate their own illumination.

‘Inferiora gubernat per superiora, non propter defectum suae virtutis, sed propter abundantiam suae bonitatis, ut dignitatem causalitatis etiam creaturis communicet’ (St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, Ia, 22, 3): God governs inferior beings by those that are superior, not from any defect of power, but because of the abundance of His goodness, in order to communicate even to creatures the dignity of being causes.

It is given to them (to the Angels of the first hierarchy) to imitate Jesus Christ in a more lofty way, and they participate in the first communication that is made of the divine and human virtues (*Celest Hier.*, vii.).

‘Usque ad diem iudicii semper nova aliqua supremis angelis revelantur divinitus de his quae pertinent ad dispositionem mundi et praecipue ad salutem electorum’ (St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.*, Ia, 106, 4): Until the day of judgement new mysteries will be constantly revealed by God to the highest Angels about those things that concern the disposition of the world and principally the salvation of the elect.

Comparison of the ministry of Angels in the Church with the ministry of the Priest.

‘By the exercise of the sacred functions we come near to the Angels, trying to place ourselves like them in a state of immutable sanctity’ (*Eccles. Hier.*, i). This idea is expressly treated in *Celest. Hier.* xii.

‘Tota virtus sacramentorum a passione Christi derivatur, quae est Christi secundum quod est homo, cui in natura conformantur homines non autem angeli, sed potius secundum passionem dicitur modico ab angelis minoratus (Heb. ii.), et ideo ad homines pertinet dispensare sacramenta at in eis ministrare, non autem ad angelos: sciendum tamen quod sicut Deus virtutem suam non alligavit sacramentis quin possit sine sacramentis effectum sacramentorum conferre, ita etiam virtutem suam non alligavit Ecclesiae ministris quin etiam angelis possit virtutem tribuere ministrandi in sacramentis’ (*Sum. Theol.*, IIIa, 64, 7): The whole power of the Sacraments flows from the Passion of Christ, which Christ underwent as man—as man, to whom men, not Angels, are conformed in nature, and who by His Passion is said to have been made a little lower than the Angels. And therefore it belongs to men and not to Angels to dispense the Sacraments and to exercise a ministry in relation to them. But it is

necessary to know, however, that just as God has not so bound His power to the Sacraments as to be unable to produce the effect of the Sacraments without the Sacraments, similarly, He has not so bound His power to the ministers of the Church that He is unable to grant to the Angels also the power of the sacramental ministry. St. Thomas is thinking of certain miraculous facts, for he adds: '*Sicut quaedam templa dicuntur angelico ministerio consecrata*': It is thus that certain temples are said to have been consecrated by the ministry of Angels.—It follows that the sacramental power does not necessarily make man superior to the Angels. . . .

The avenging Angel of the earthly Paradise is replaced in the Church by the Angels who crown Her, the guardians of Her towers, the torches of Her palace.

\* \* \* \*

The Evil Angels.—The Church 'tempted' like our Lord by the demon.

'*Nescitis quoniam Angelos judicabimus?*': Do you not know that we shall judge the Angels? (1 Cor. ii. 3). Their sight is blind to the beauty of the Church whilst that of the Good Angels is ravished by it.

‘Si cognovissent, nequaquam Dominum gloriæ crucifixissent’ (1 Cor. ii.): Had they known it, they (the evil angels, the princes of this world) would not have crucified the Lord of glory.—‘Si autem perfecte, et per certitudinem cognovissent, ipsum esse Filium Dei, et effectum passionis ejus, numquam Dominum gloriæ crucifigi procurassent’ (*Sum. Theol.*, I, 64, I ad. 4): If they had known perfectly and with certainty that He was the Son of God and what the effect of His Passion would be, they would never have acted in such a way as to have procured the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. St. Thomas seems to have been led to this conclusion by the opinion of St. Augustine which he mentions, and according to which the mystery of the Incarnation was only known to them just sufficiently to keep them in fear; they could not therefore have foreseen its beneficent effects. They were restricted to procuring them indirectly by driving men to crucify the Son of God.

The top of the Gates of Dis crowned with demons (*Inferno*, viii. 82).



Below is the complete text of the primitive anaphora (the palimpsests of Verona) that may be regarded, after the researches of Dom Cagin, as the nearest approach to the apostolic theme of the Canon. (Cf. Dom Paul Cagin, *L'Eucharistia, canon primitif de la Messe*, Rome, Paris, Tournai, Desclée, 1912, in-4, 334 p; *L'Eucharistia, fragments de la 3 partie*, Desclée, in-fol., 48 p; M. l'abbé A. Vigoutel has given a résumé of the researches of Dom Cagin in the *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, 1st May, 1915, pp. 146-160.)

Gratia tibi referimus, Deus,  
Per dilectum Puerum tuum

Jesum Christum,  
Quem in ultimis temporibus  
Misisti nobis  
Salvatorem  
Et Redemptorem  
Et Angelum voluntatis tue:

Qui est Verbum tuum inseparabile,  
Per quem omnia fecisti

Et beneplacitum tibi fuit;

Misisti de coelo in matricem  
Virginis,

Quique in utero habitus  
incarnatus est  
Et Filius tibi ostensus est

Ex Spiritu Sancto  
Et Virgine natus.

Qui voluntatem tuam complens

Et populum sanctum tibi  
adquirens,  
Extendit manus, cum  
pateretur,  
Ut a passione liberaret

We give thee thanks, O God,  
Through thy well beloved  
Son

Jesus Christ,  
Whom in these last days  
Thou hast sent to us  
To be our Saviour,  
And our Redeemer,  
And the Angel, the messenger,  
of thy will.

He is thine inseparable Word

By whom thou hast created  
all things

And who was well pleasing  
to thee;

Thou didst send Him from  
Heaven into the bosom of  
the Virgin,

In her womb He was incarnate

And was presented to thee  
as thy Son

Born of the Holy Ghost  
And of the Virgin,

Fulfilling thy will

And acquiring for you a holy  
people,

He extended His hands when  
He suffered,

In order to deliver from  
suffering

Eos qui in te crediderunt,  
Qui cumque traderetur  
voluntariae passioni,  
Ut mortem solvat  
Et vincula diaboli dirumpat

Et infernum calcet

Et justos illuminet  
Et terminum figat  
Et resurrectionem manifestet,

Accipiens panem,  
Gratias tibi agens,  
Dixit: Accipite, manducate:  
Hoc est Corpus Meum,  
Quod pro vobis confringe-

tur;  
Similiter et calicem,  
Dicens: Hic est Sanguis Meus,  
Qui pro vobis effunditur.  
Quando hoc facitis,  
Meam commemorationem  
facitis.

Memores igitur mortis

Et resurrectionis ejus  
Offerimus tibi panem et  
calicem,  
Gratias tibi agentes  
Quia nos dignos habuisti

Adstare coram te  
Et tibi ministrare.  
Et petimus,  
Ut mittas Spiritum tuum  
sanctum

In oblationem Sanctae Ec-  
clesiae.

In unum congregans deos  
omnibus

Qui percipiunt sanctis,

Those who believed in thee.  
And when He was betrayed,  
willingly, to the passion,  
In order to destroy death,  
And to break the chains of  
the devil,

And to put hell under His  
feet,

And to illuminate the just,  
And to determine the end,  
And to manifest the resur-  
rection,

Taking bread,  
Giving thanks to thee,  
He said: Take, eat,  
This is My Body  
Which shall be broken for  
you.

Similarly for the chalice,  
Saying: This is My Blood,  
Which shall be shed for you;  
When you do this,  
You are keeping my com-  
memoration.

We therefore remembering  
His death

And His resurrection,  
Offer to thee the bread and  
the chalice,

Giving thanks to thee  
Because thou hast made us  
worthy

To stand before thee  
And to minister to thee.  
And we beseech thee  
To send thy Holy Spirit

Upon the oblation of thy  
Holy Church;

And gathering them together  
in one, to grant to those  
Who, being holy, communi-  
cate,

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In repletionem Spiritus  
 Sancti,  
 Ad confirmationem fidei in  
 veritate,  
 Ut te laudemus et glori-  
 ficemus,  
 Per Puerum tuum Jesum  
 Christum,  
 Per quem tibi gloria et  
 honor  
 Patri et Filio cum Sancto  
 Spiritu  
 In sancta Ecclesia tua  
 Et nunc et in saecula saeculo-  
 rum.

Amen.

The fullness of the Holy  
 Spirit,  
 For the confirmation of the  
 faith in the truth  
 So that we may praise and  
 glorify thee  
 Through thy Son Jesus  
 Christ  
 Through whom be glory  
 and honour to thee,  
 To the Father and the Son  
 with the Holy Ghost  
 In thy Holy Church  
 Now and for ever and ever.

Amen.